DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 604 EA 025 018

AUTHOR Stronach, Ian, Ed.
TITLE Quality Assurance in Education: Current Debates. A Report on a SOED-Sponsored Seminar (Stirling, Scotland, United Kingdom, June 1992).
INSTITUTION Scottish Office Education Dept., Edinburgh. HM Inspectors of Schools.
PUB DATE Mar 93
NOTE 100p.; For a related document, see EA 025 019.
AVAILABLE FROM University of Stirling, Department of Education, Stirling, Scotland FK9 4LA, United Kingdom (3 British pounds).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Assessment; Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; Effective Schools Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Criteria; *Evaluation Methods; Evaluation Problems; *School Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS *Scotland

ABSTRACT

Proceedings of a workshop held at the University of Stirling, Scotland, to critically examine issues in quality assurance (QA) in education are provided in this document. QA is the generic title for a series of business-management models that have been applied to educational contexts to describe and promote school effectiveness. Five papers and their subsequent discussions are presented: (1) "Quality Assurance and School Development Planning" (David Hopkins); (2) "Quality Assurance: The Perspective from Fife" (Alex McKay); (3) "A Business Perspective on Quality Management" (George Elliot); (4) "Quality Assurance in Strathclyde" (Phil Drake); and (5) "Changing School Change Strategies" (David Reynolds). A concluding section attempts to find common ground among participants and outlines the elements of a QA practice: linking diagnosis with development; defining indicators and acknowledging values; developing new research approaches; designing organizations; proving the effectiveness of quality management; eliminating the negative; and using ocular images. References accompany each section. Ten figures are included. (LMI)

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Quality Assurance in Education: Current Debates

A report on a SOED - sponsored seminar held at the Department of Education, University of Stirling, June 1992

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University of Stirling
March 1993

EA025018

Commissioned by: *Audit Unit*

HM Inspectors of Schools

The contributors would like to thank Lisa Davies for typing and redrafting this report.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Office Education Department sponsored a one-day workshop at the Department of Education, University of Stirling, in order to look critically at notions of Quality Assurance in education (or what schools do, how they know it, and whether it's any good - to pre-date the jargon). Quality Assurance is the generic title for a series of business management movements which have been spreading into education through Quality Forums and attempts to apply business models of quality improvement including Total Quality Management (TQM)[1] and BS 5750 to educational contexts. One way of looking at this phenomenon is to see it as part of the schools-industry interchange - bringing business management principles to bear on the solving of educational problems. More loosely, quality assurance can be seen as a series of attempts by the education system to describe and promote effectiveness - whether based on the development of performance indicators for schools or on advancing some version of professionalism. The aim of the workshop was to take a broad look at where these various attempts at Quality Assurance seemed to be getting us.

The question then was: what will make for a 'quality' workshop? The solution was to invite experts and practitioners from industry and from education to talk to each other, to span the range from researcher to policy-maker to practitioner, and to introduce people who probably didn't agree, but would like a chance to

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[1]Dale & Plunkett(1991) acknowledge that TQM is variously defined. Its common features they hold to be: continuous improvement; satisfaction of internal and external customers; involvement and development of employees; positive encouragement of participation; integration of customers and suppliers in the improvement process. They see TQM as a long-term commitment.

argue with each other. Our ambition here was fruitful disagreement.
The following (in no particular order) attended the workshop:

Professor Ian Jamieson, Department of Education, University of Bath
Mr George Elliot, formerly Director of Quality Management, Johnson & Johnson
Ms Maggi Allan, Senior Depute Director, Central Region
Mr Iain Ovens, Depute Principal, Glenrothes College
Dr David Hopkins, University of Cambridge
HMCI Archie McGlynn, Director: Audit Unit, HM Inspectors of Schools, SOED
Dr David Reynolds, University of Cardiff
Professor Barry MacDonald, University of East Anglia
Ms Liz Miskimmin, Headteacher, Breadalbane Academy
Dr Nigel Norris, University of East Anglia
HMI Isobel McGregor, Audit Unit, HM Inspectors of Schools, SOED
Mr Philip Drake, Depute Director and Head of Quality Assurance Unit, Strathclyde Region
Mr John MacBeath, Director, Quality in Education Centre, Jordanhill College of Education
Mr Richard Evans, Research and Intelligence Unit, SOED
Mr Alex McKay, Chief Adviser, Fife Regional Council
Mr John Young, Depute Director, SFEU

In addition, Sally Brown, Sheila Riddell, John Lloyd and
Ian Stronach represented Stirling's Department of Education.

The brief for the meeting was as follows:

Within industry, education and other public organisations, there is a general trend towards defining what counts as quality in the provision of a service or product, to making public that definition (within the organisation, or more broadly amongst customers or clients), and to establishing criteria which will indicate the effectiveness of the organisation in fulfilling its aims. The outcomes are usually envisaged in terms of increased responsiveness to customer and client needs, greater accountability to the community, and the provision of a higher quality of service.

These trends have most recently been highlighted in various Charter initiatives, but they also have a longer pedigree, as well as a number of very different philosophies and methodologies. Within education, the 'school effectiveness' movement has sought to define and compare the effectiveness of schools, and to identify key indicators of successful and unsuccessful performance. In different sorts of ways, approaches concerned with 'illuminative' and 'democratic' evaluation have sought to portray the nature of quality and the processes through which educational ideals are realised in different educational cases - a less comparative and more qualitative approach. There have also been movements to harness the potential of action research and school self-evaluation to the requirements of reform and improvement.

The purposes of this workshop therefore were:

To bring together experts in various fields and methodologies concerned with 'quality assurance', including education and business.

To define the range of prescriptions that are being advanced under the banner of 'quality assurance', and to consider the achievements, possibilities and problems each of these evaluative methodologies faces.

To identify theories and practices of particular promise, with a view to further research and development.

To produce a report on the outcome of the discussions, for dissemination to educational bodies and individuals in Scotland and elsewhere.

As a glance at the list of participants will suggest, we ended up with a skew towards education - two business participants pulled out at the last minute due to pressure of work. In addition, we found that primary education was under-represented in our discussions. Nevertheless we covered a lot of ground.

The report consists of five papers. Each paper takes a different perspective and presents a version of Quality Assurance. The papers are by David Hopkins, Alex McKay, George Elliot, Philip Drake and David Reynolds - and they range from school-based models to authority-wide initiatives, and to a business management approach. But this is a report based on a workshop, and a workshop has 'quality' because of the kinds of interaction and argument that occur. It is a forum <u>for</u> argument, and against the kind of set-piece presentation that academics, policy-makers, and decision-makers sometimes favour. For this reason, each presentation was 'contested' by a discussant likely to offer a detached and critical view of each Quality Assurance prescription - Barry MacDonald, Ian Jamieson, David Reynolds and Sally Brown. The discussion was taped, and I have presented a version of the arguments put forward after each input so that the reader of this report can get a purchase of the nature of

the debate about 'quality'. In addition, I have raised issues that seem to be implicit in the presentations and counter-arguments - so that this account goes beyond the actual meeting. It transcends the meeting in a second kind of way. The draft of the report was fed back to the participants; they were encouraged to add further to the debate at that stage.

Naturally, the discussion unpicks some of the certainties of Quality Assurance (however defined) and raises questions and possibilities that we cannot yet answer or address. Yet uncertainty is no enemy of education: it demands that we make up our own minds about current situations and future possibilities in the absence of definitive knowledge or absolute values - because we have to act, not because we can be sure - and a report such as this should make that claim on its readers if it is to be educational rather than merely informative or polemical. Indeed, the point can be extended. In general we need an educational culture that can acknowledge and inquire honestly into its uncertainties - as a condition of any educational definition of 'quality'. We need such a culture so that we can test fashions against functions - whether the former are imported from business or domestically produced. That 'testing' is a basic quality of the critical reflection that separates our ideas from our ideology. And that reflection, of course, is what we mean by education.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE and SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING[2]

David Hopkins[3]

And what is good, Phaedrus,
And what is not good -
Need we ask anyone to tell us these things?
(Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
Robert Pirsig)

In both **Zen**... and his most recent book **Lila**, Pirsig is fundamentally concerned with the concept of *Quality*. One conclusion to be drawn from his narratives, and this quotation, is that quality is not an absolute, but open to multiple definitions. As David Hargreaves (1992) notes in his recent essay on 'Quality in Education':

> There is no simple definition of quality in education. Different groups judge quality in education from different perspectives and the meaning of quality depends upon the context and which aspect of education is in focus. 'What is quality in education?' is not an answerable question. It is more useful to ask:
>
> - who is making a judgement?
> - about what or whom in education?

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[2]Much of this paper is based on ideas discussed in more detail in our book, **The Empowered School** (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991), and the DES booklet **Planning for School Development** (Hargreaves et al, 1989).

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- based on what criteria?
- using what information/evidence?
- for what reason?

Although both Pirsig and Hargreaves support the idea that conceptions of quality are an individual achievement, what both these quotations lack is an organisational perspective. Increasingly, individual aspirations within education have to be seen within an institutional setting.

Some years ago when I first became interested in these matters, I came across the phrase, 'If your fish are dying take a good look at your aquarium'. That phrase has stayed with me as a reminder of the importance of the organisational settings within which professionals work out their lives. Whilst preparing this paper I came across two other equally memorable quotations. The first is from Deming, the doyen of 'Total Quality Management' who claims that management is responsible for 85% of quality problems (quoted in Cuttance 1992:1). Apparently Deming has in the light of subsequent experience and increased wisdom revised that figure up to 98%! He argues that it is the task of management to dismantle the barriers preventing employees from doing a good job by encouraging them to work smarter not harder. The second comment is from Edgar Schein (1985:2) who claims 'that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture...'

It seems to me that 'quality', and a system for ensuring quality, needs to be both an individual and an organisational responsibility. The discipline of preparing this paper forced me to review, albeit somewhat cursorily, some of the management literature on 'quality'. Although I find the notions of quality assurance attractive, I cannot say the same for all of its literature. I was

pleased therefore to recently receive a copy of a paper by Peter Cuttance (1992) on this theme. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, Cuttance (1992:11-12) claims that:

> A fully integrated quality management system is driven by a knowledge and skill-based culture, not a rule-based culture. It must address:
>
> - Planning throughout the organisation
> - Systems for implementing plans eg action plans
> - A system for monitoring the progress of plans
> - A system of audit and review
> - A system for 'benchmarking' the performance of various processes
> - Rewards must be linked to systems for measuring performance improvement; however, it is important that the appraisal of individuals be independent of the auditing of quality generally
> - There must be a commitment to training and development throughout the organisation.

This position is broadly in line with the position we have adopted in our School Development work at Cambridge. We are centrally concerned in both development planning (vide Hargreaves & Hopkins 1991) and school improvement (vide Ainscow & Hopkins 1992) - with the culture of the school. In particular; how 'culture' sustains an ethic and practice of reflection and enquiry on the part of the students and staff in school, the structures that support this ethic, and the conditions necessary for their implementation.

In this paper I wish to focus on just one aspect of our recent work and its connections with quality assurance. The area of focus, the role of evaluation within school development planning, is as I hope will become readily apparent,

particularly germane to the area of quality assurance. We are entering a new 'era' in school evaluation. The change in relationship between schools and LEAs in England and Wales, and the increasingly centralised nature of educational policy, has led to an expectation that schools will also pay a more active role in monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation procedures and schemes for school self evaluation prevalent in the early eighties, are no longer appropriate in times of innovation overload and such changing responsibilities (Hopkins 1989). New models need to be sought; this paper describes one approach.

In what follows I sketch out in a fairly practical and specific way an approach to school self evaluation that is consistent with the context in which schools are currently working and the pressures they are currently facing. Development planning provides a structure for this approach to school evaluation. Four different yet complementary strands to this evaluation process are described. The audit or review phase, the annual review that reports on the success of the current year's development plan, and the role of the LEA in ensuring the quality of schooling, are only briefly discussed. More attention is given to the ongoing evaluation of the development plan during implementation, and the role of teachers in the evaluation process. I believe that if evaluation is to effectively support development, then it has to become part of the daily work of teachers. The basis of quality lies in my opinion in the professional judgment of teachers, and this is enhanced by the systematic involvement of teachers in the evaluation process. But first a word about development planning.

Development Planning

The distinctive feature of a **development plan** is that it brings together, in an overall plan, national and LEA policies and initiatives, the school's aims and values, its existing achievements and its needs for development. By co-ordinating aspects of planning which are otherwise separate, the school acquires a shared sense of direction and is able to control and manage the tasks of development and change. Priorities for development are planned in detail for one year and are supported by action plans or working documents for staff. The priorities for later years are sketched in outline to provide the longer term programme.

Development planning encourages governors, heads and teachers to answer four basic questions:

- Where is the school now?
- What changes do we need to make?
- How shall we manage these changes over time?
- How shall we know whether our management of change has been successful?

These questions are about both evaluation and change. The purpose of development planning is to help the school provide practical answers to them. Although this initially takes time and energy, the gain is that the school is enabled to organise what it is already doing and what it needs to do, in a more purposeful and coherent way.

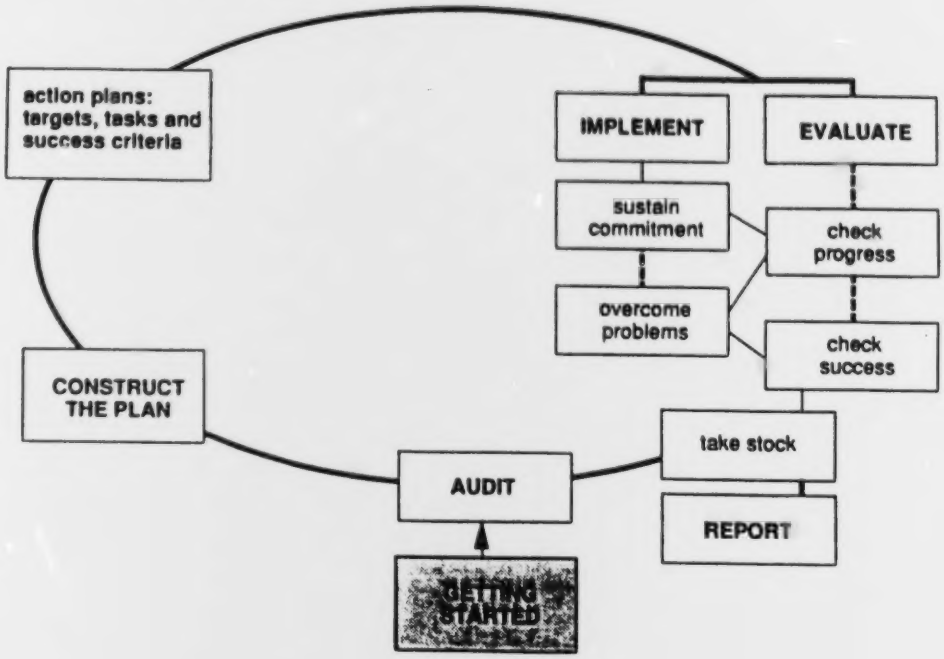
The plan, of perhaps four to five pages, might include:

- the aims of the school
- the proposed priorities, the time-scale and who is involved
- the justification of the priorities in the context of the school
- the methods of reporting outcomes
- the broad financial implications of the plan

Once the plan is agreed, the priorities have to be turned into more detailed **action plans**. These are the working documents for teachers. Priorities are subdivided into targets, which specify the tasks involved and who will be responsible for them. The targets and tasks establish what is to be done. The success criteria establish the basis for judging whether the targets have been met. When the targets and success criteria are clear and specific, implementation and evaluation become easier.

This basic description of development planning is based on the advice in our DES published booklet (copies of which were distributed to every school in England and Wales) **Planning for School Development** (Hargreaves et al 1989). In that booklet we illustrate the process of development in diagrammatic form as seen in **Figure One**.

Figure 1 - The Planning Process



An Approach to School Self Evaluation

There are four aspects to an approach to school self evaluation based on development planning. The first is what is commonly known as the 'audit' or 'review' phase, where school staff review the school or an aspect of the school's operation prior to engaging in development work. The second is the process of formative evaluation that continues whilst a group of staff are carrying out development work. The third evaluative activity occurs annually, when a senior member of staff (and the school as a whole) reviews the work of the school in order to inform themselves of their own progress, report to parents and governors, and prepare for the following year's development plan. The fourth element is related to external inspection and its contribution to internal development. Although four separate activities, they all combine to create a coherent approach to evaluation that not only provides information to

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those outside the school, but is also supportive of the work of teachers and the process of development planning. In this paper, as I have already mentioned, the main focus will be on the process of internal formative evaluation, but the other three elements are discussed briefly below.

i) the audit or review phase

Current approaches to the audit phase have generally built on the experience of school self evaluation in the early eighties: be they LEA initiated eg the ILEA and Oxfordshire guidelines (for a review see Clift et al 1987), school initiated eg the School's Council GRIDS booklets (Abbott et al 1988), or school improvement oriented eg the work of the OECD International School Improvement project (Hopkins 1987).

Our current work suggests that schools find that carrying out a full review of all provision and practice is very time-consuming. Most self-evaluation schemes demanded a thorough examination of the life and work of the school and two or three terms were often set aside for this. Today, the pressure for change makes this approach less appropriate. We suggest that this energy is now best used in carrying out a series of small-scale focused or **specific audits** in key areas, and in implementing the action plans that may result from these enquiries. A planned series of specific audits creates a rolling programme which provides a picture of the school built up over successive years.

Although the responsibility for deciding the areas for specific audit, carrying them out and summarising the results, will vary according to the size and phase of school, there are some common patterns. Selecting the areas for specific audit will usually be done by the head, following discussions with governors

and staff. The responsibility for carrying out the audit normally rests with one teacher or a team. The head or a senior member of staff then summarises the result of the audit. In this way, the audit not only paves the way for the identification of priorities for development, but also makes an important contribution to the school's overall approach to evaluation.

ii) looking back and moving on

Taking stock, as is seen in **Figure One**, occurs at the end of each planning cycle. In essence, "taking stock" is a collation and brief analysis of reports on each of the priorities. This is the most formal evaluation activity of the school year and should be co-ordinated by a senior member of staff. " Taking stock" is the point when the school checks the success about completed priorities and assesses progress for priorities which are implemented in part.

The purpose of **taking stock** is to:

- examine the progress and success of the implementation of the plan
- assess the extent to which the school's aims have been furthered
- assess the impact of the plan on pupils' learning and achievement
- decide how to disseminate successful new practices throughout the school
- make the process of reporting easier

"Taking stock" provides the basis on which the head can make an annual progress report to the governing body and parents. After "taking stock" and reporting on progress, the school prepares the next three-year development plan. The priorities for the second year of the original plan should now become the priorities for the first year of the new plan. There is therefore no single

point in the school's calendar that is exclusively concerned with evaluation. Evaluation becomes part of everyone's professional activities.

iii) school self evaluation, the LEA, and external inspection

Development plans have enormous potential for contributing to the LEA's current task of monitoring and evaluation. As we have already seen, in effective development planning a considerable amount of self-evaluation by schools is involved in the processes of audit and evaluation. LEA officers and external inspectors could combine their task of monitoring with the school's own activities in a spirit of partnership, which both eases their task and enhances the skills of the staff in such monitoring and reporting. At the same time, both LEA officers and external inspectors will recognize the tensions, at all levels, between accountability and development. Improved monitoring and evaluation can assist both accountability and development. For example, discussing, clarifying and agreeing the criteria for evaluation and monitoring, on the basis of which judgments about success will be made is an important task for all concerned. This approach would help schools to be more effective in development planning and makes monitoring and evaluation a shared responsibility which in itself helps ensure 'quality assurance'.

It appears that the LEA - school relationship will continue to change and evolve over the next few years. Whatever structure finally emerges, schools will always need some form of external support and to establish arrangements for working together - be it a type of regional authority or on a consortia basis. There are a number of roles involved in supporting school self-evaluation: that of critical friend moderating the schools' evaluation process; the provision of advice and support on aspects of the process and on identified needs; as well

as fulfilling the inspection function, which itself is based on the schools development plan. Irrespective of the format, the issues surrounding the support for, and monitoring of school self-evaluation, will remain the same.

Although all of these elements of evaluation are important, it is the daily work of teachers that determines the quality of education for our young people. We turn to this crucial issue in the following section.

Evaluating the Implementation of Development Planning

Many existing guidelines on school development planning describe implementation and evaluation as separate stages or phases. In some regards this is sensible: one cannot truly check on whether targets have been met until after implementation. The risk, however, is that schools may begin to ask themselves basic questions about evaluation later in their planning and so run into problems.

In our work on development planning we therefore treat the processes of implementation and evaluation as interlaced, not as a period of implementation followed by a "big bang" evaluation at the end. If implementation and evaluation are linked, evaluation can help to shape and guide the action plan rather than being a *post mortem* upon it. It is in this way that quality assurance is built into the system.

The key to the integration of implementation and evaluation is the action plan. An action plan is a working document which described and summarizes what needs to be done to implement and evaluate a priority. It serves as a guide to implementation and helps to monitor progress and success.

Each **action plan** describes, preferably on one side of A4, the programme of work to be undertaken. It contains:

- the **priority** as described in the development plan
- the **targets** or the more specific objectives for the priority
- the **success criteria** against which progress and success in reaching targets can be judged
- the **tasks** or work to be undertaken to reach each target (these may be attached as an appendix): there are tasks for both implementation and evaluation
- the **allocation of responsibility** for targets and tasks, with time-lines
- the dates for meetings **to assess progress**
- the **resource** implications (materials and equipment, finance, INSET etc)

The action plan is therefore a convenient summary of and guide to action. An example of an action plan, in this case, on home-school links in primary school, is given in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Action plan for home-school partnership

Priority: to improve our partnership with parents and to devise a home-school reading scheme.

Target 1: Survey of parents' views during first term.

Success criteria: (i) number of parents responding; (ii) quality of the response to each of the three main issues in the survey (details to be decided after questions are framed).

Target 2: Write policy for home-school reading, inform parents of it through newsletter and review book stock, also in first term if possible

Success criteria: (i) adviser to judge quality of policy; (ii) judgment of parent-governors and reaction of parents to newsletter; (iii) review of stock to be defined during the activity.

Target 3: Involvement of parents in the workshops and book fair and in the home-school reading scheme; publication of articles in local newspaper (second or third term, depending on progress).

Success criteria: (i) attendance of parents and their response to the workshops and book fair; (ii) changes in parental behaviour judged by borrowing of books and pupils' reports on home reading; (iii) changes in pupil attitudes to reading judged by observation and increase in reading skills; (iv) more community involvement in reading judged by comments to staff and parent governors.

Time: three terms

Dates: for progress checks - by all at each meeting
for success checks - by Mrs Green as appropriate

Resources: for new book stock and newsletter

Co-ordinator: Mrs Green

Teachers often find defining the success criteria the most difficult part of the action plan. It is much easier to break down a priority into targets and tasks than it is to define success criteria. Targets must, however, specify the criteria

by which success in reaching the target can be judged, both by team members and by others. These **success criteria**, are a form of school-generated performance indicator, which:

- give **clarity** about the target: what exactly are you trying to achieve?
- point to the **standard** expected by the team
- provide advance warning of the **evidence** needed to judge successful implementation
- give an indication of the **time scale** involved

The success criteria are a means for evaluating the outcomes of the plan, as well as providing benchmarks for development. It is important that they specify the minimal acceptable standard, though the team will usually have aspirations to a standard of outcome which is much higher than this.

There are a number of examples of success criteria in **Figure 2**. Some of them are quantitative (eg number of parents responding), and some qualitative (eg quality of response to each of the 3 main issues...). In the latter case, the exact details of the criteria have to be decided at a later date, after the questions have been framed; so that becomes a task in itself. With one of the other qualitative success criteria, someone external to the school, in this case an adviser, is asked to help judge quality. In all of these cases the use of evidence is mentioned in the action plan, and the *aide memoire* of tasks contains both implementation and evaluation activities.

At least once a term progress should be formally checked for each task against the success criteria associated with the target. The team will need some clear *evidence* of the extent of progress: if such evidence is recorded, the work load at a later stage will be reduced.

A **progress check** is an act of evaluation in the course of implementation. It is a response to the question; how are we doing so far? Many progress checks are intuitive, a 'feel' for whether things are going well or badly. This is a natural part of monitoring one's activities: it becomes more systematic if these intuitive reactions are shared within the team, and evidence is produced to support them.

Regular **progress checks** involve:

- giving somebody in the team responsibility for ensuring that the progress checks take place
- reviewing progress at team meetings, especially when taking the next step forward or making decisions about future directions
- deciding what will count as evidence of progress in relation to the success criteria
- finding quick methods of collecting evidence from different sources
- recording the evidence and conclusions for later use.

Success checks take place at the end of the developmental work on a target. The team now decides how successful the implementation of the target of priority as a whole has been. Checking success need not be complex or time-consuming. It will consist largely in collating, and then drawing a conclusion about, the earlier progress checks.

A **success check** means:

- giving somebody responsibility for collating the progress checks
- allowing time for the team to discuss and analyse the extent of the success

- noting changes in practice as a result of the plan
- writing a brief report on target implementation
- collating the reports on each of the targets to create a final report on the priority as a whole with indications of what helped and what hindered progress
- working out the implications for future work
- assessing the implications for all those not involved in the implementation and for the school as a whole.

To summarise, once the action plan is being implemented the evaluation tasks are monitored through the **progress** and **success** checks. Prior to implementation however, it is helpful to have some form of **readiness check** to ensure that the basic requirements for action are in place.

This approach to development planning requires that teachers use their professional judgment in a systematic way to evaluate progress. Teachers already, as part of their everyday activities, monitor and evaluate their own actions as well as the behaviour and work of pupils. If teachers did not rely upon their **intuitive professional judgment**, they would not be able to cope with the complexities of their work. There are occasions, however, when it cannot be wholly relied upon as a basis for making a decision. Such occasions are when teachers are not entirely confident about their intuitive judgment, or the issue is of considerable importance or significance. In these circumstances, teachers make a **considered professional judgment**, which requires some action to check the intuitive judgment. A considered professional judgment is reached through reflection and further investigation. Using **intuitive** and **considered** professional judgments is a routine part of being a teacher. Both are a natural and inherent part of evaluating progress and success in the

implementation of a development plan.

Innovations often create new working circumstances with which the teacher is less familiar. Since teachers usually want the innovation to succeed, there may be a bias towards noticing the most favourable evidence. Professional judgment may therefore be less trustworthy than usual. In these cases a **refined professional judgment** is required. This is an opportunity for enhancing professional judgment, and is achieved:

- through discussion with colleagues about the extent of progress or success in implementing a priority
- by establishing agreement on standards used to make judgments
- through mutual observation in the classroom
- through the use of informed opinion.

In short, development planning provides ample opportunities for teachers to talk with others, to seek agreement on standards, to observe one another and to read relevant documentation: all are means of refining the professional judgments which are essential to evaluation.

There are circumstances when teachers need to **complement** even a refined professional judgment with additional evidence. Such occasions are; when others need to be persuaded of the validity of teachers' judgments, or when there are benefits to all if teachers' judgments are backed by independent evidence.

The basis for evaluating how far targets and success criteria are met will often consist of a mixture of professional judgments and complementary evidence.

Collecting complementary evidence is usually more time-consuming than making professional judgments, so careful thought needs to be given to questions such as: What kind of complementary evidence is appropriate to documenting success? How can it be collected as quickly and easily as possible without adding substantially to existing work-loads?

There are different types and sources of complementary evidence:

- observations (eg mutual observation during teacher appraisal)
- views and opinions (eg short questionnaire to colleagues, students or parents)
- written materials (eg a 'book look' of students work)
- statistical information (eg trends in student attendance rates)
- more formal research (eg by a colleague on 'masters' course).

Extending teachers' professional judgments therefore links the professional development of the individual teacher to the development of the school as a whole as well as improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Summary

In this paper I have argued that development planning, in particular the integration of implementation and evaluation provides a structure for quality assurance in schools and complements the ways in which teachers work and is consistent with the mainstream literature on 'Quality'. This approach to **quality assurance** has a number of interlinked components:

i the **school development plan** provides the framework

ii the key to the evaluation process is the **action plan** through which

priorities are translated into **targets** and **tasks** with associated success criteria. **Success criteria** refer to the standard required and the evidence needed to judge successful implementation. Each action plan contains tasks for implementation and evaluation.

iii there are three main evaluation checks associated with the action plan: **readiness checks** before, **progress checks** during, and **success checks** at the conclusion, of implementation.

iv all of these evaluation checks are summarised in the **stock take** that provides a basis for reporting on the previous, and constructing the next, development plan.

v the school builds up an evaluative picture of itself through a rolling programme of **specific audits**. Audits contribute to the overall process of school self evaluation, as well as providing specific information on developmental priorities.

vi the **teachers' professional judgment** and the quality of **evidence**, are crucial to all these evaluation activities. Not only is the teachers' professional judgment the basic building block for evaluation, it is also enhanced through the evaluation process.

vii **external inspection and LEA support** can be used to monitor and support school evaluation and development planning.

When operating in concert, these activities provide an infrastructure for a new 'era' in school self evaluation and development. Although I have described them in a linear fashion, in reality they coalesce. In particular, this approach links individual definitions of quality to whole school aspirations through an emphasis on professional judgment. It is through this holistic approach to school development that our schools are managing to ensure quality in times of change.

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DISCUSSION

Barry MacDonald was the discussant. He had a number of doubts about the Hopkins model - or perhaps it was the whole idea of models for school development. First, there was the problem of reducing education to a series of priorities and targets. He felt that the surface rationality of such a manoeuvre ignored the problem that education was an opportunistic activity - it had no linear flow, no predictable cycles of growth. It could not be legislated for.

He also had doubts about the whole time-consuming business of accountability - in the States the evidence seemed to be that it led to a diminishing of the quality of education. More accountability, less education - education was displaced by its industry in accounting for itself.

But he agreed that the notion of a school 'culture' was of central importance. What was not so important was to write down everything - schools worked best as a 'talk culture', based on the professional and collegial relationship of teachers, and on the quality of the judgements they made about educational issues and practices. This was the lost territory that schools must regain, and he was apprehensive that the world of 'targets' took us further away from that territory - targets contained such a notion of hierarchy about them, they forced a false consensus on people, while education actually proceeded best when consensus was minimised. He argued that the reason for that was pretty simple - we don't really know very much about how to teach and learn, and so we have to maintain diversity, and avoid the kind of death by documentation that such schemes were in danger of offering. The key was perhaps to draw as clear a boundary between the routine in schools, and those things which were actually educational. Be very efficient about the routine, but be sure to leave

room for the sorts of diversity and serendipity that the task of education involved - and that the plurality of our communities demanded. If 'Quality Assurance' had a meaning in education, then it ought to mean that we had to compete in terms of the quality of our ideas rather than some reductive notion of our 'performance'.

On the other hand, **Liz Miskimmin** was a lot more supportive. As a headteacher, she had used David Hopkins' 'cycle' and found it useful and motivating. Nor did she believe that in practice an audit had to generate so much additional paper-work. And she certainly warmed to David's injunction: 'work smarter, not harder'.

There were other objections (or possibly qualifications) to MacDonald's criticisms. The first of these was to reject any split of school activities into 'how the school was managed' and 'how learning happened'. The point of development plans - argued **Alex McKay** - was to unite these two elements, and not to leave them as separate responsibilities of managers and teachers. In addition, the development plan was a way of doing <u>less</u> in one sense - it placed a boundary on what the school wanted to achieve in a given time. He stressed that different types and sizes of schools needed different 'models' for development. The second objection was that MacDonald had polarised school activities too much - spontaneity and management were not as irreconcilable as he had suggested. Nevertheless - **Sheila Riddell** maintained - management development plans could easily undermine teachers' sense of professional responsibility if they were hierarchical in their origin or in their implementation.

In response to some of the above David Hopkins argued that his model was based on a professional definition of the teacher and on a recognition of the primacy of the school 'culture' - and so the notion of a 'talk culture' was intrinsic to it. But it was also based on a recognition (perhaps unlike the implicit romanticism of MacDonald's view) that teaching had been too isolated and private - his model could and should encourage more 'talk' of that professional kind, and different conversations between different groups of teachers. As to the danger of bureaucracy overwhelming school development plans - he was once again firmly aphoristic: the thicker the worse.

In retrospect, the first paper by Hopkins and the reply of MacDonald set up a kind of ideological menu for some of the participants. Either they warmed to the notion of a 'talk culture', and it became a recurring theme. Or they felt that his critique was dismissive - the voice of the 'old liberals', as **John Young** of the SFEU later put it. His feeling was that education was benefitting considerably by drawing on development planning linked to quality initiatives from a range of contexts. Five colleges in Scotland were currently completing the first year of a highly successful quality management project in which these principles are being put into practice. He rejected the kind of polarity MacDonald had tried to establish - development plans helped schools articulate, define, remember, and carry out their mission.

In his paper, David Hopkins had also brought up a central conundrum - what is "quality" in education? He made the point that there is no discrete quality there to define - quality is in the eye of the beholder - and this left us with a dilemma: if we weren't sure what 'quality' meant, what use were systems of 'assurance'? His solution, however, wasn't so different from MacDonald's - to leave the definition of quality in the hands of the 'professional judgment of teachers'. This was a notion that would later be challenged.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE : THE PERSPECTIVE FROM FIFE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Alex McKay

Introduction

In Fife, we are at the stage where a number of strands of a regional strategy on quality assurance are in place; some more are under development; others are at the stage of being identified as issues. (And there are probably some we have not thought of yet!). The picture I will describe is an amalgam of these. I should stress it only applies to the schools' sector. At the outset I should point out some key features which have contributed significantly to the background.

- Relationship with the Centre for Educational Sociology at Edinburgh University. CES have undertaken research studies using data from Fife which has informed our approach, particulary in relation to the analysis of examination results. This is continuing.
- Primary assessment programme

  For many years, a structured programme of screening and diagnostic tests has been in place in the primary sector.
- Belief that the performance of (secondary) schools should be viewed in a context.

  The important points of this context are pupils' prior attainment and the socio-economic background of the catchment areas of individual schools.

Over the last period Fife has had close links with the Scottish Office Education Department (via the ADES/SOED liaison group) on a number of their developments in performance indicators; we have valued this.

Promoting Quality and Assuring Quality

I find this a useful distinction to inform planning, especially as head of an advisory service which has to combine a role in educational development and its role in monitoring the work of schools.

A number of regional policy initiatives are significant contributors to promoting quality. These are:

- School Development Planning, now being introduced in a three year phased programme in all Fife schools

- School Development & Appraisal (SD & A), whose implementation is linked to the introduction of SDP

- Regional Staff Development Programme, focused on priorities identified by the Education Authority and schools

- Disseminating Good Practice across a wide range of activities using formal and informal networking

- Setting Performance Standards/Success Criteria; particularly in any new policy initiative it is vital to make clear the expectations of the Education Authority as a sound basis both for implementation and monitoring

At this stage the mechanisms under development for assuring quality are:

- Key Indicators (listed below)

- 'Value-added' Approach i.e. the development of means of identifying the contribution made by the school to the individual pupil

- Supported School Evaluation, via SDP (School Development Planning

- Monitoring/evaluation of SDP, both as a process and in terms of the outcomes

Key Linkages

In this section, the contents reflect more a growing awareness of an often complex mix of interactions rather than a statement of what is in place.

Sector Plan ↔ SDP ↔ SD & A (Staff development & appraisal)

Within the Education Department for the past two years we have produced an Education Department Sector Plan which indicates the priority areas which the EA and its schools should address. In time we see this being more fully informed by the Development Plans of individual schools. It will also require greater clarity in terms of success criteria.

The link between SDP and SD & A has been considered carefully in the training programme established to launch these initiatives. The SDP is

seen as the framework within which individuals' contributions to achieving the outcomes of the Plan is discussed and against which any necessary staff development is identified.

The similarities between SDP and SD & A in terms of the processes has been emphasised at all possible opportunities,

Directorate ↔ Advisory Service ↔ Schools

In terms of these sorts of linkages, a range of issues have emerged. Briefly these are:

- the expectations of the EA; in particular the need to control the number and pace of initiatives schools are expected to undertake
- the relationship between appraisal of the headteacher (which is a confidential process undertaken by a member of directorate) and SDP (which is an open process supported by a School Development Plan Adviser)
- resourcing the SDP's; some issues here are familiar (e.g. competing priorities); others require change to existing systems (e.g. in-service training course places)
- consistency of approach; many people are involved in both processes
- deployment of the advisory service; a time commitment has been given to each school but there are pressures especially in the primary sector.

Authority ↔ Schools ↔ School Board/Community

A third way of considering the linkages between educational system, schools and individuals, centres on communication and accountability.

The context here may be changing significantly e.g. in relation to the future of local government. But there are questions such as:

- what is reported to the EA, School Boards, whole community?
- by whom is this reported?

The need to articulate policy and engage in wider consultation is an enhanced requirement.

Key Indicators

We propose to develop a system where the following key indicators would be considered on a regular basis.

- pupil attainment in national examinations (secondary schools)
- pupil attainment in regional assessments (primary schools)
- attendance rates
- attitudes of parents, pupils and teachers (initially by questionnaire)
- information on parental choice
- requests for teacher transfer
- exclusion rates

to be considered against a background, where appropriate, of

- pupils' previous attainment
- standard information about the school (e.g. building, staffing profile, SDP etc.)
- socio-economic data

This information would be gathered and collated centrally and shared with schools. It would be used as part of a system of review of performance. Trends would be important. It is fundamental that the indicators are not absolute measures, but rather items on an agenda which would explore the reasons in more depth through discussion and/or further investigation. Good practice as well as areas of concern would be sought.

Some Issues

There is a need for clarity of roles. The Government's consultative paper on Management in Schools potentially changes significant aspects of what could be termed 'level of empowerment' between officers of the Authority (i.e. directorate, advisory service) and headteachers.

The processes will operate differently between, say, a small rural primary school and a large urban secondary school. A fundamental tenet of Fife's approach is that schools vary in terms of how certain processes are currently managed and implemented. It is necessary to recognise this and act accordingly.

These processes generate much information, some of it based on complex analysis. There are questions of how best to present it to professionals and to the wider public. Linked to this is the need to integrate current information management systems to meet these needs and to avoid duplication of effort.

A continuing tension will be varying cycles, both in terms of length of cycle and timing. For example the regional budgetary cycle runs from April through to March of the following year while schools prefer cycles based on the school year. Budgetary cycles are annual; SDP and SD & A cycles are for two years. The improvement in the integration of these will require continuing attention along with strengthened communication/consultation systems. I suspect that from the schools' perspective the key issue will be the responsiveness of the Authority to their individual needs.

Conclusion

Much time and effort has been, and is being, spent to build understanding of the overall approach. There are concerns in schools about, for example, the publication of crude league tables of SCE results. The pressures on the education system as a whole currently are such that many are uncertain about the way ahead - "the goalposts keep shifting". For some, whether in schools or at authority level, the cultural change represented by these proposals is threatening. Any response to such expressions of concern has to recognise this. A significant theme of such a response has been to restate the central importance of there being a focus on pupil achievement as being of fundamental importance to School Development Planning and Staff Development and Appraisal and, more widely, in any thrust on quality assurance.

The biggest challenge remains the management of the change from maintaining current systems to the establishment of new ones at a time when there are many competing priorities.

DISCUSSION

Sally Brown confessed that she came to these discussions as a sceptic - her fear was that development plans might become 'an end in themselves' rather that acting as a 'support for change'. When David had made the claim that 'managing change is about changing management', she felt that the danger was in assuming that some things can really be changed. There was a need to take the broader culture of the school more firmly into account - schools needed to have developed the quality of 'talk' that Barry MacDonald raised.

A second danger was that Quality Assurance, and similar formulae for 'improvement', could tend to acquire the status of a 'holy grail' and that the process could become static rather than dynamic - obedient to preordained success criteria and rather rhetorical goals. There was also a danger in the insistently consensual rhetoric. Were shared notions of success so likely to emerge? Wasn't it more important that such things were actively debated, rather than that they were necessarily resolved?

Finally, she was uncertain about <u>whose</u> quality this was - whose criteria are we talking about anyway? Presumably it was not adequate if it was only the school's criteria. The business of making criteria more public was both fraught with difficulty and with expense. She acknowledged that sophisticated added value approaches were possible, but how would school, regional and national versions of appropriate criteria be reconciled, without appeal to some underlying fantasy of consensus? Her doubts centred on this question: is education about getting it right or is it about a continuing dialogue about how to do things well? That was a philosophical question which raised the practical problem: are recipes possible?

Ian Stronach raised an objection to the idea of a 'talk culture' - at least as a naturally evolving aspect of schools - did teachers have a 'natural' language with which to talk about the qualities of what they did? **Ian Jamieson** thought there were problems in assuming that they had. The notion of language implied the existence of a language community. But there were very heterogeneous publics out there, trying to make sense of a series of private languages. There were also problems connected to the politics of such communities - the issue of what should be public and what should be private was a central one - to make teacher appraisal public knowledge (as some universities were doing) reduced all possibilities of development and encouragement to a public language of blame and pillory - or false applause.

Iain Ovens - as a senior manager in FE - agreed that the language of ranking was often unhelpful educationally. But we could identify standards. The idea that these could not be made public was very difficult to defend to outside audiences. He believed that both of the papers thus far had suggested that a consensus regarding a culture of talk could emerge. What they were trying to do in FE was to employ a total quality approach to get focused on the student and the curriculum as the main concern of the organisation. But a teaching/learning concern required organisation - in order to develop a student-centred culture. The organisation had to promote ways of establishing a criterion-referenced, quality approach. He found it incredible that academics could reject that. The reaction in FE had been good -people had become very excited about it because it was student-centred and concerned with the real issues in the curriculum. This was the first time that the student had come up in discussion, as **Nigel Norris** reminded us. He recalled Pollitt's account of quality control in the health service, where the client had had no say. Medical audit was by professional judgement. Only recently had patient satisfaction

surfaced. Surely concerns about quality should involve 'broader constituencies' than those we seemed to be thinking about at the moment?

Liz Miskimmin agreed, and claimed that it was feasible. Pupil and employer reactions were taken into account when the school's Work Experience Scheme was evaluated. They involved parents and the School Board in their annual reviews. They conducted a follow-up of school leavers in order to get at their views on the relevance of (rural) schooling to later life in urban Higher Education. What was important for her was the creation of a climate in which self-evaluation flourished. The process of development planning was as important as the product.

Iain Ovens felt that a stress on self-evaluation as opposed to evaluation was beginning to set up another false polarity. They had Performance Indicators. But they were not an end in themselves so much as a trigger for talk about improvement - which included the students. That process encouraged people to set their own targets and led to cultural change in the organisation.

The notion of a 'community of talk' was one that **John MacBeath** supported, but one which ought to be advanced by managed interventions - such as student evaluations (by questionnaire or whatever) that set new agendas for learning. After all, the quality of 'talk' in an educational institution could be low - talk need not be professional. Institutions had to do something to develop forms of talk that were professional.

At this point **David Reynolds** shifted the argument on to a different plane. School development planning - if it worked - would maximise the variation between schools since, he hypothesized, the qualities required for school

development are unevenly distributed. This raised a critical problem of equality. Were we happy to support school development planning which increased inequality? As far as the private/public boundary was concerned, his belief was that we had manifest evidence that keeping it private meant that nothing would happen. The key thing was to keep the focus on children's learning and not just celebrate various professional processes. "If we don't, then the politicians will, and we'll have another 13 years of 'solutions'."

'Talk culture' was a political strategy, Barry MacDonald concluded. The pressure to be accountable would not go away and it was important to do something to act against the impoverishing process that it could involve. It was a question of checks and balances. He supported the sorts of demands that various constituencies might make on schools, and recognised the need for 'talk' not just to mean 'talk shop'. The goal was the development of a resilient and articulate profession that could keep its place in the debate and deal with its audiences and their demands.

We neglected David Reynold's bombshell about school development increasing disparities between schools, although it seems in retrospect a theme that deserved more attention at the time - but it came out of the blue, and we already had our preoccupations. These did seem to be changing a little - softening? To caricature the position somewhat, opposition to Quality Assurance had started with an implicit division between the 'natural' (the professional, the culture, 'talk', the community) and the 'artificial' (the Performance Indicator, the top-down nature of intervention, the erosion of professionalism by managerialism, the vision of a panacea), but now the waters were beginning to muddy. Was it possible to marry these two worlds in productive ways - as the FE people and Liz Miskimmin seemed to think? If so

what were the most fruitful forms of 'marriage'? One of the most difficult issues seemed to be that all forms of quality assurance develop knowledge (or alleged knowledge) of performance. Arguments for public knowledge (accountability, pressure to change, right to know) conflicted with other pressures (developmental aim, avoiding punitive measures, misunderstood and misleading 'indicators' etc). And that debate ranged untidily across a range of other positions. The educationists were making things complicated: it was time for industry to make them simple.

4. A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT

T George Elliot[4]

A first issue: are business perspectives relevant to educational management? There are plenty who might wish to say 'no'. In fact, there are many in business who are quick to deny the relevance of any outside management advice - 'our organisation is different'. My experience is that such claims for exemption belong amongst the great Lies of Our Times - 'the cheque's in the post', 'I'm here to help you'. In fact organisations have more in common than people often care to recognise, and claiming to be different can be a way of deflecting action.

In this respect, the presentations this morning are reassuring - the issues seem the same, people seem on the right track. They talk about managing change, about school development plans, identifying success criteria, creating standards like BS5750, and they are concerned for the client. On the negative side, they also identify the same problems - time, and the two piles of work that initially build up when you try to run things and improve them at the same time. On the basis of these similarities, we may conclude that business and education are talking about the same thing.

Assuming that to be the case, we can move on to the next question: what are the essentials of quality management? They are a central focus on the customer, and a determination to improve the product or service.

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[4] George Elliot was unable to write up his own contribution. This account is based on records of the workshop.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Involvement of an Entire Business Organisation
In a Process of Customer-Driven
Continuous Improvement

The starting point for quality is the end of the process - the customer. But it is not enough to meet the customer's requirements. We need an ambitious definition of quality which meets and exceeds customers' expectations. The most important word in that formula is 'exceeding' - 'delighting the customer' as the management literature puts it. The aim has to be to improve rather than just control quality, and therefore there has to be a clear understanding that quality control is not the same thing as quality improvement:

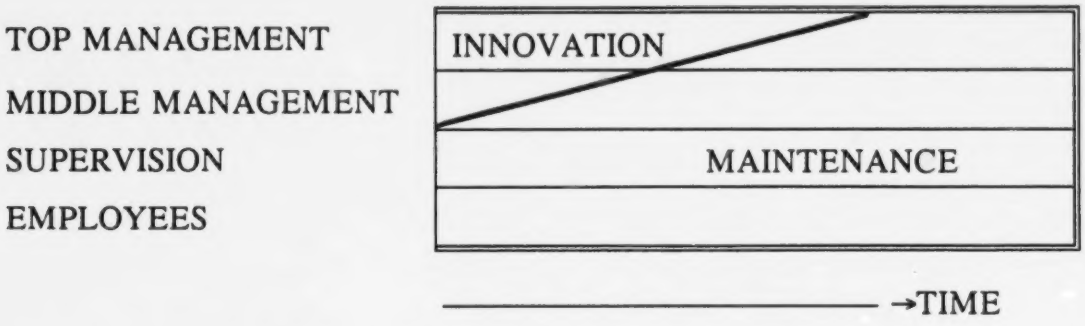
CHARACTERISTICS	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**
Maintaining Standards	Improving Standards
Outcome Orientated	Improvement Orientated
Problem Solving	Continuous Improvement
Short-Term Goals	Never-Ending Process
Manufacturing Focus	Business Focus
Focus on People	Focus on Process
Creates Defensiveness	Promotes Teamwork
Periodic Review	Continuous Measurement
Mandatory	Choice
Addresses Special Causes	Addresses Special and Common Causes

Of course, quality control can do much good - it may improve the culture and efficiency of the organisation and establish a more precise control over processes, but it lacks that central connection with customer satisfaction, and it lacks the dynamic behind the drive to 'continuously improve' the product or service in line with what customers need and would like. The old notion of 'quality' as 'fitness for purpose' is inadequate in a competitive world - it's a 'gimme', the customer's needs minimally expressed. Success today means exceeding those minimum criteria, and doing so as a matter of survival. If we don't, we can be sure our competitors will.

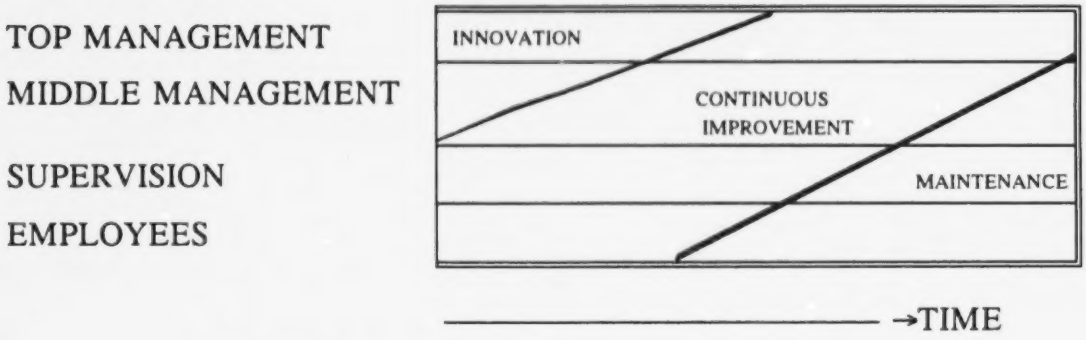
Quality Improvement also implies the involvement of <u>everyone</u> in the company in the task of improvement - rather than a separate department, or a special 'project' or drive. It builds change into the foundations of the organisation, and implies the kind of organisation where values like collaboration and choice are fundamental. It requires a proactive workforce. That's what Total Quality Management means: the involvement of an entire business organisation in a process of customer-driven continuous improvement. Translated into educational terms it would mean envisaging a system that runs from the Scottish Office down to the children in the classroom, in which all the needs of the customers were paramount, and for whose improvement the entire system worked.

That difference - between control and improvement - is the chief distinguishing characteristic between Western perceptions of job functions, and the way Japanese business organisations work:

WESTERN PERCEPTION OF JOB FUNCTIONS



JAPANESE PERCEPTION OF JOB FUNCTIONS



What are the results of such a policy? What gains can we expect?

THE OUTPUTS OF QUALITY

IMPROVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	**FASTER/MORE SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**	**MORE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES (REDUCED COSTS)**

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

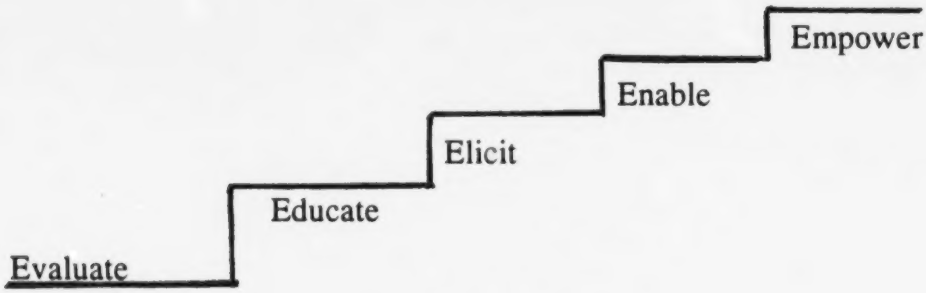
In business terms, such an approach enables us to identify the winning strategies for the 1990s. Not all of them translate readily into educational contexts, although of course it is true that national education systems compete with each other indirectly, in terms of the quality of their output and its subsequent productivity. Presumably, moves towards European integration will make that competition more direct, and keener.

	WINNING COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES IN THE 1990'S
1.	Get close and stay close to customers
2.	Manage the entire value chain
3.	Create competitive advantage through innovation
4.	Implement a philosophy of continuous improvement
5.	Use time as a competitive weapon
6.	Develop an obsession for quality
7.	Use technology for competitive advantage
8.	Implement innovative human resource policies
9.	Re-engineer the organisation
10.	Align the supporting infrastructure

It is important, however, to stress that this is not a formula for working harder. It is instead a question - as David Hopkins said - of 'working smarter'. The concern is for the qualities rather than the quantities of the process. Nor is it an elaborate set of mechanisms and injunctions: it is simply a way of showing how organisations can learn to work better in the interests of their customers.

If that's the ideal how do we get there?

Steps towards Quality Improvement



The first question is "where are we now?" The process of evaluation has to be private - no pointing of fingers. Its purpose is to establish relevant performance indicators (themselves customer-driven), and to prepare the ground for educating people in the organisation at all levels. That process of education is not just about informing or instructing people: it is about getting them on board, with a clear understanding of where the company is going, and giving them the power to do things. This policy of empowerment - and it is language familiar to education - implies a different organisational culture. It is not about the old management by control; it is management through empowerment.

The second question is "where on earth do we find the time?" What's wrong with most organisations is that they don't have enough time to think about what they're doing. Middle and senior management get stuck in 'fire-fighting' routines - and people get selected and promoted for their ability to put out these fires. They need to be doing different things - a far greater proportion of company time needs to be invested in planning for innovation, devising improvements in products and services. The educational equivalent is for headteachers to spend little time on routine issues - their job is the job of improvement, of helping to generate and use employees' ideas on improvement, of maintaining that drive towards 'continuous improvement'.

So what should be in the mind of the leaders of an organisation dedicated to Quality Improvement? The following 8 self-evaluation categories emphasise the need for very specific goals, and a management style that is based on facts and information rather than on hunches and past experience.

SELF-ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES
1. LEADERSHIP
2. INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS
3. STRATEGIC QUALITY PLANNING
4. HUMAN RESOURCE UTILISATION
5. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
6. CUSTOMER-DRIVEN QUALITY RESULTS
7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
8. BUSINESS VITALITY

The stages imply that we start by asking: how well are we doing? Compared to whom and when? What are the judgements of our customers? Beyond that, the organisation has to see its development in educational and training terms, and at the heart of the process must be the ability to evaluate both customer satisfaction and 'self-assess' progress towards meeting and exceeding it. These principles are revolutionary in terms of the old patterns of business organisation. The hierarchical pyramid of the past is inverted, and the job of the board - at the base of the triangle, not its apex - is to support change, to empower work groups, to facilitate improvement. Good leaders within such organisations will understand how systems work, treat people as individuals not units, coach rather than judge, solve problems rather than create them, put the

team before themselves, and not expect perfection.

To return to the first question: what can education learn from business? I suggest that Quality Improvement is a strategy for education - it will focus attention on the key processes and outputs of the education system: it will care for its customers. It will revolutionise notions of management and participation. I also suggest that Quality Improvement is an educational strategy, based on the need to involve, educate and empower the members of the organisation. In that sense, educational and business needs are complementary.

Of course, such an inversion of organisational and leadership styles implies that the organisation will be more equal, that it will break its old boundaries and taboos, and that it may even have some fun.

DISCUSSION

Ian Jamieson was the discussant. He observed that the Quality debate in education was informed by industrial practices. It was fairly widespread, and there were similarities with some aspects of educational problems - but people in education tended to worry about the differences rather than the similarities - especially when the prescriptions were Fordist rather than post-Fordist. They also worried about the language - 'customers', 'end-users' - and sometimes felt that they had been forced to buy into that language.

Another concern could be labelled the wants/needs dilemma. Industry certainly had a very sophisticated dialogue with its customers - ongoing, well beyond surface views of the product, but there were dangers in translating that into the

educational sphere - it could lead to the marketing hype that surrounded Total Quality Management (TQM), and an obsession with markets and images could lead to heavy spending on the lavatories (parents are interested in that), on the entrance hall (got to project a good image) and brochures (sell the school to prospective customers). Yet education had trouble measuring and thinking about its outcomes - as someone said: 'education is a process masquerading as an output'.

There was also a danger in seeing standards (like BS 5750) as a kind of control, a 'conformance' to minimum standards. And yet, as Barry MacDonald had said, teaching was a creative, diverse activity that is hard to standardise. What would a notion like 'contract compliance' look like in education? Some of TQM's talk of 'customers', 'climate' and 'culture' was unhelpful - it missed the collegial sense that teachers had of their profession.

On the other hand, it would be interesting to explore what the notion of internal markets might mean within education.

There were a couple of other objections to the idea of applying TQM to education - it only fitted situations where the process was very sure, and the product clear, John Lloyd remarked. George Elliot replied that this was not a model to be applied to educational contexts, so much as a way of conceptualising how an organisation - any organisation - could begin to think about its customers, purposes and processes. It was not prescriptive in the sense that educationists feared, and it encouraged people to make their own definitions of key concepts and purposes. But Barry MacDonald remained sceptical about the concept of 'customer' and its associated assumptions of 'needs' - the danger in over-emphasizing that term was that it obscured the

process through which business constructed its customers' needs - *'cultivating* the taste by which they hope to be enjoyed'. So when George Elliot said that the system had to be 'customer-driven', what did that mean? Sheila Riddell added that a further weakness of the notion of education as an item of consumption was that it placed an undue emphasis on cost - Special Needs pupils were expensive, 'uneconomic', and parents-as-customers might not be happy about a school emphasizing that aspect of its work. Nonetheless schools have responsibilities to pupils who are difficult to educate, not just to ideal pupils and parents who are able to act as critical consumers. George Elliot nevertheless maintained that the degree of unnecessary waste in many organisations - before such initiatives took place - could easily be 20%. They had to address the potential of the reform as well as its limitations.

John Young was getting impatient by this time - they had been using TQM approaches in FE, and they felt very comfortable with the messages they were getting back so far. He was disturbed at the 'agnostic' and 'sceptical' positions adopted by the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) representatives - was ITE going to remain agnostic about 'the new culture of quality'? He also pointed to the danger that the debate might become unduly polarised, between things like autonomy v institutional planning; professionalism v managerialism. It was about empowering all the key players in the system - creating an enabling culture. Development planning at all levels - national, regional, institutional - was a way forward. Shouldn't ITE programmes try to be the 'leading edge of the new culture'? And also adopt competence-based approaches?

For Barry MacDonald the issue could not be reduced to radicals v. conservatives in that kind of way. There remained a conflict between product-specification and the view of education that Stenhouse had advocated - 'a

process is educational to the extent that it makes its outcomes unpredictable'. Ian Jamieson added that sets of procedures and competence models worked best 'on the periphery' of what education was all about - not in the teaching/learning nexus itself, where a reflective model was best. Perhaps FE was happier because its central concern was training?

Archie McGlynn felt that what was most attractive about George Elliot's outline was its focus on the culture of an organisation, and the way it brought together the processes of quality assurance and quality improvement.

A new possibility was introduced into the debate by David Reynolds. He felt that 'one of our problems in education was that we pick things up when other people are dropping them' - like TQM, which had been an '80s movement. He found himself agreeing that industry was worth listening to, but that it was also true that education was different. However, he felt that HROs were worth looking at - High Reliability Organisations (such as airlines and nuclear installations). What would a school that did not contemplate failure look like? The features of HLOs - intense training, willingness to throw the rule book away in a crisis, tight operating procedures, firing the incompetent, intense interaction and monitoring - were much more interesting than 'out of date TQMs'.

Liz Miskimmin observed that the debate seemed to be going against models but she felt that - in practical terms - they helped to prevent people 'fumbling around trying to get started', so in a sense which model was less important than the prompt of some model - and school development planning had been just that kind of successful prompt for her school.

It seemed that the contribution from industry had tended to open rather than close the kinds of divisions that had characterised our discussion. Objections were made on a number of grounds. There were both cultural ('not our language') and moral objections ('customer' is not an innocent concept since 'needs' are manufactured as well as met in the market). There was concern that 'meeting needs' might then be reduced to the 'selling' of the school to its 'customers' (a preoccupation with lavatories rather than learning). And also a suspicion that the kinds of standardisation that industry demanded of its products could not be imported into education without serious risk of undermining holistic notions of education and reducing school 'values' to crude indicators of exam results, attendance etc.

The FE representatives disagreed. They saw the possibility of a 'cultural revolution' in their organisations (and claimed to see the beginning of its realisation). They felt that it was wrong to see Quality Assurance initiatives as importing alien values into educational organisations - these were means to the achievement of educational ends, such as student-centredness. In this they were supported in two ways by George Elliot. First he had argued that initiatives like TQM outlined a process that was based on the organisation's own choice of values. These were stated in initial 'vision' documents. Second, he had pointed out in his paper that the claim that 'our organisation is different' was a very common evasion; as a general truth it had the same status as that other claim 'the cheque's in the post'. Within the seminar, it now seemed as if the split was between some of the researchers - with their variously shaded scepticism - and the managers, who felt that <u>some</u> version of Quality Assurance was necessary, at least as a stimulus to systematic change. Those most closely concerned with teacher development perhaps straddled these two poles - their central concern was for systems of quality assurance that promoted rather than

undermined teacher professionalism - and held the goal of a 'reflexive, self-conscious professionalism' as paramount (as Sally Brown put it).

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN STRATHCLYDE

P. F. Drake

Quality has become a major preoccupation with many organisations, with no exception for schools and local authorities. Local education authorities have a responsibility under the Education (Scotland) Act to provide efficient education in their areas. The expectations of what constitutes efficient education are increasing, and recent legislative changes, particularly in England and Wales indicate the interest that is being taken in this by central government. The concept of "quality" is, of course, difficult to define and there are often misconceptions about its meaning. "Quality" can be invested with almost mystical significance, understood and practised mainly by Japanese industrialists and arcane academic coteries. The problems of defining quality can induce an intellectual paralysis preventing progress beyond the definition stage. On the other hand, many organisations seem to indulge in quality assertion without much justification.

In Strathclyde the focus on quality was sharpened by the report from the INLOGOV consultants who had been commissioned to advise on the structure of the department in 1988. The consultants recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on the quality of provision. They referred to an anxiety on the part of elected members who wished to be sure that the money spent in education was being used to best effect. For example, they quoted one elected member as having said to them:

> We spend almost nine hundred million on the education service...But do we really know how well spent that money is?...Have we any way of knowing?...Does anybody know?

The consultants recommended that the authority should establish quality assurance as a high priority and that a statement of mission should be developed to clarify aims and confirm a sense of direction.

The regional council responded by establishing the quality assurance unit with the following functions:

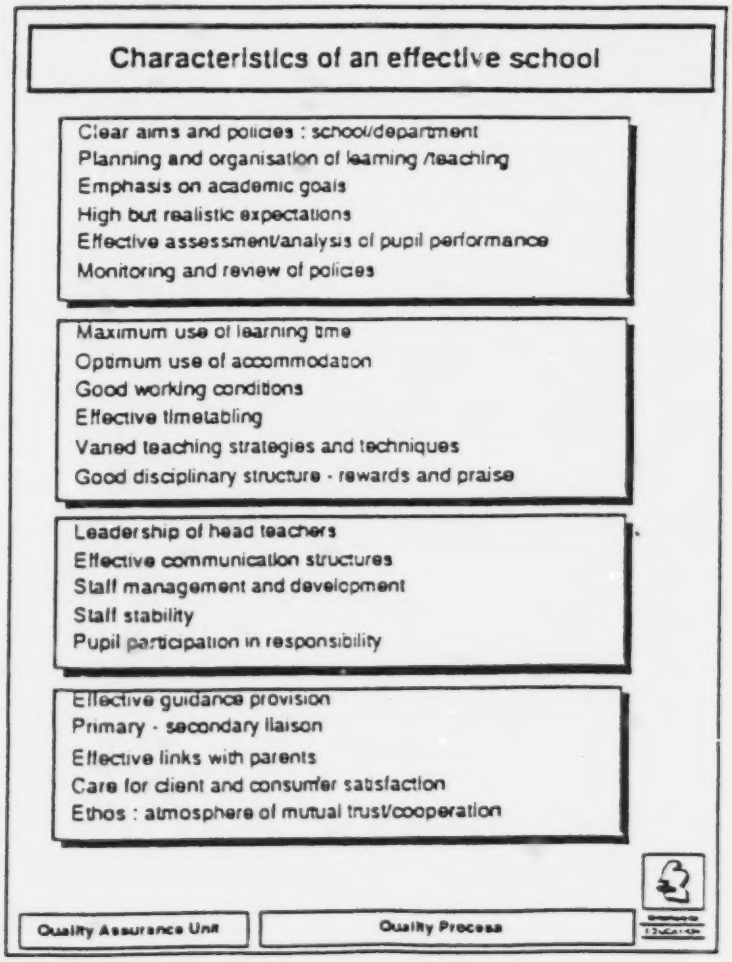
- to promote quality in the department
- to devise ways of assessing quality
- to monitor the work of the department
- to identify and disseminate good practice
- to investigate issues of concern

A team of inspectors was appointed and over the last two years they have visited almost every pre-five centre and school in the region, talking to staff, school boards, parents and pupils. Inspections have been carried out in 70 establishments and surveys of 26 aspects of education provision in the region have been undertaken. The reports of these surveys have highlighted the good practice which has been identified.

Inspection is, of course, an external evaluation to the establishment and whereas this is important in terms of the accountability of the service, it is clear that to improve quality it is necessary to build quality improvement into the system rather than simply to impose a monitoring process. Self-evaluation and quality improvement within individual establishments is required to encourage long-term continuous improvement.

In order to carry out external evaluation and to provide help for internal or self-evaluation, the quality assurance unit began the development of a quality process which could form the basis for such approaches. The quality process was intended as a fair and standard set of criteria for inspection and self-evaluation within the department. It is clearly necessary to adopt a consistent approach to the evaluation of different establishments and this was considered to be the best way of going about it. There were already various sets of performance indicators available. Coopers and Lybrand had produced a set in their feasibility study for local management of schools and the DES had also produced a set. It was known the Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in Scotland were also working on performance indicators but they were not available at that time. The sets available all had a significant drawback. The performance indicators did not appear to be coherently derived from the stated aims of the organisation and were thus free floating. On the other hand the experience of organisations which had adopted such approached as total quality management indicated that it was crucial to establish agreed aims and then check on the extent to which those aims were being achieved. For a local education authority, it would therefore be important to check on the extent to which the policies of the authority were being achieved.

As a background to the process, a survey of research into school effectiveness was carried out and a list of "characteristics of an effective school" was prepared. The characteristics identified are listed overleaf.


Characteristics of an effective school
Clear aims and policies : school/department
Planning and organisation of learning /teaching
Emphasis on academic goals
High but realistic expectations
Effective assessment/analysis of pupil performance
Monitoring and review of policies
Maximum use of learning time
Optimum use of accommodation
Good working conditions
Effective timetabling
Varied teaching strategies and techniques
Good disciplinary structure - rewards and praise
Leadership of head teachers
Effective communication structures
Staff management and development
Staff stability
Pupil participation in responsibility
Effective guidance provision
Primary - secondary liaison
Effective links with parents
Care for client and consumer satisfaction
Ethos : atmosphere of mutual trust/cooperation
Quality Assurance Unit
Quality Process

Obviously any such list is likely to stimulate debate and much discussion took place regarding the various elements listed here. Some people might wish to include other elements and there might be discussion on the relative priorities. However, few would wish to exclude many of the elements from the list.

Approaches to quality being adopted by other organisations were also examined. It is often proposed that education is different from other activities and that there is little that schools can learn from other organisations. However, most organisations face similar issues related to the most important resource: the people who work for them. The motivation of staff, good staff support, communication structures, consultation and delegation are all considered to be of prime importance in getting the best out of staff. From work in the field of

total quality management three basic principles were identified:

- conformity to specification
- continual effort to improve
- customer care

The jargon in which these principles are enshrined can be off-putting and so the principles have been translated for practical purposes into:

- keeping to agreed aims
- continual effort to improve
- caring for the needs of those who use the service

Keeping to agreed aims

The importance of clarifying aims is critical to the purpose of the organisation. The INLOGOV consultants had recommended that a mission statement be produced for the education department and it was therefore agreed by the director of education that this task should precede all others in the establishment of a quality process. The task was undertaken by a working group composed of heads of the various sectors of the education service: primary, pre-five, secondary, further education, community education, psychological services, careers service, educational resource service. A draft version of the mission statement was subjected to wide consultation and has now been approved by the education committee for use as the basis for the work of the whole education department. It is important to note that this mission statement does not "belong" to the quality assurance unit. As the statement of departmental mission it has been used as the basis of the quality process but its use is much wider than this.

Mission statement

We aim to offer education of a higher quality. We will seek to:

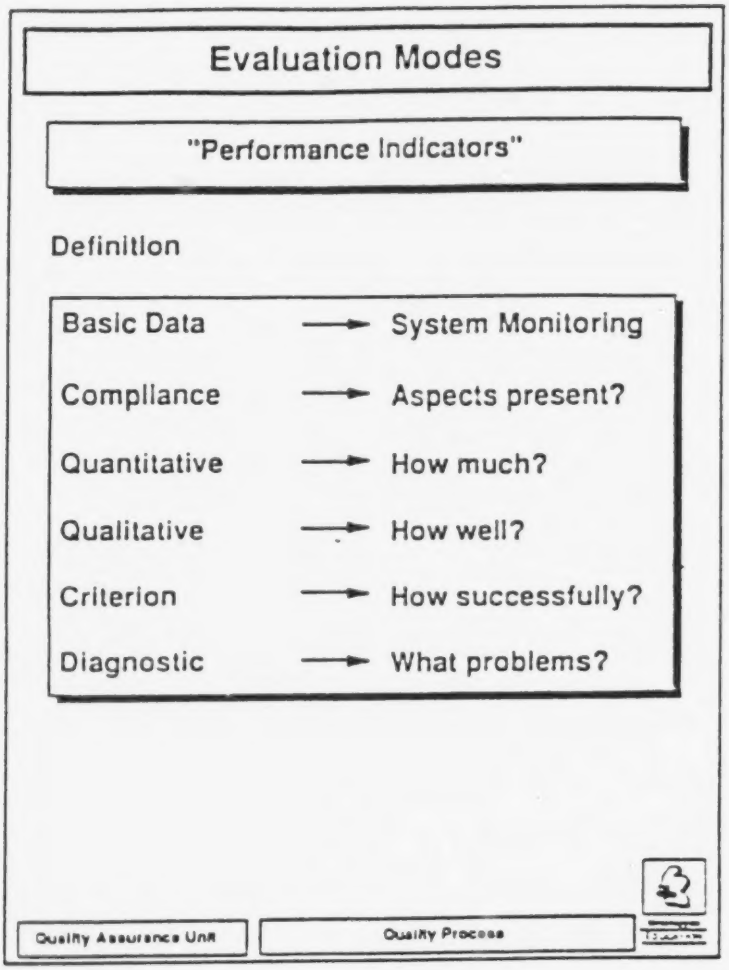
- provide a full range of courses and services
- enable all individuals to achieve their potential
- supply suitable premises and resources
- encourage access to education throughout life
- foster genuine partnership in education
- promote equal opportunity and social justice
- support economic growth and prosperity

Continual effort to improve

Mission statements are of no value if they are not put into practice. Continuous improvement will only take place if there is a constant monitoring process to gauge how well we are meeting our aims. It is in this context that performance indicators are important. However, much of what happens in education cannot easily be measured in a quantitative manner. It is true that because of this much of the evaluation of education has in the past concentrated on inputs - the resources that have been invested. This has caused a reaction which has resulted in far greater emphasis being placed on outputs, particularly in the form of examination results. Yet education is different from many other activities in that the process itself is of great value. The difference between education and training may be that the latter concentrates mainly on output for success criteria whereas the educational process should include the inculcation of the enjoyment of learning and the desire to continue to learn. Performance indicators therefore should include qualitative aspects as well as quantitative

elements. Qualitative indicators will always require the use of judgment by people accepted as having the experience and ability to make judgments.

A range of types of performance indicators was therefore considered and these are illustrated below.



The quality process starts with the mission statement and for each of the seven strands a set of "quality pointers" is established. Quality pointers are the issues that require to be addressed if the strand of the mission statement is to be achieved successfully. For each quality pointer a set of "indicators of good practice" is provided. Indicators of good practice are qualitative indicators identifying the critical requirements for success. In order to assist in judging the extent to which any indicator is being met, a set of "examples of good practice" is supplied. These are not "mandatory" and it is hoped that many more will be identified when the system has been in use for a longer period of time. Figure 3 shows how a strand of the mission statement is translated from a worthy but vague principle into the practicalities of the classroom. The quantitative aspects of evaluation are identified as "scanning indicators" in the process. The concept of scanning is felt to be useful because the indicators give an impression of how the system is working as a whole. For individual establishments, scanning indicators are set against "norms" because quantitative data must be seen in context.

STRAND 2.3 Enable all individuals to achieve their potential

Quality pointer 2.3	Ethos

Indicators of good practice

2.3.3 Children's work is displayed in classrooms and around the school

Examples

- Children's work is on display in classrooms and throughout the school
- Time for displaying work is planned
- A range of materials for displaying work attractively is available:
  - *colourful frieze paper*
  - *different colours and sizes of mounting paper/ card*
  - *wall staplers*
  - *fixatives*
  - *paper trimmers, guillotines and teachers' scissors*
  - *safe and mobile steps*
  - *range of writing materials*
- Display materials and equipment are accessible and in working order
- Displays are changed regularly
- Torn and grubby displays are removed
- Children's work is captioned
- Displays of materials used for on-going classroom work are at a height children can see and easily read
- Good work from various classes are displayed in communal areas:
  - *the dining hall*
  - *reception area*
  - *medical room*
- Displays of children's work are taken out into the community:
  - *a health topic displayed in the health centre*
  - *a fiction study in the public library*
- Children are encouraged to prepare 'fair' copies of their written work for display
- Children have access to a variety of writing materials that will allow them to make interesting and attractive copies for display
- Children are given responsibility for displaying work
- There are opportunities for parents to see displays of children's work

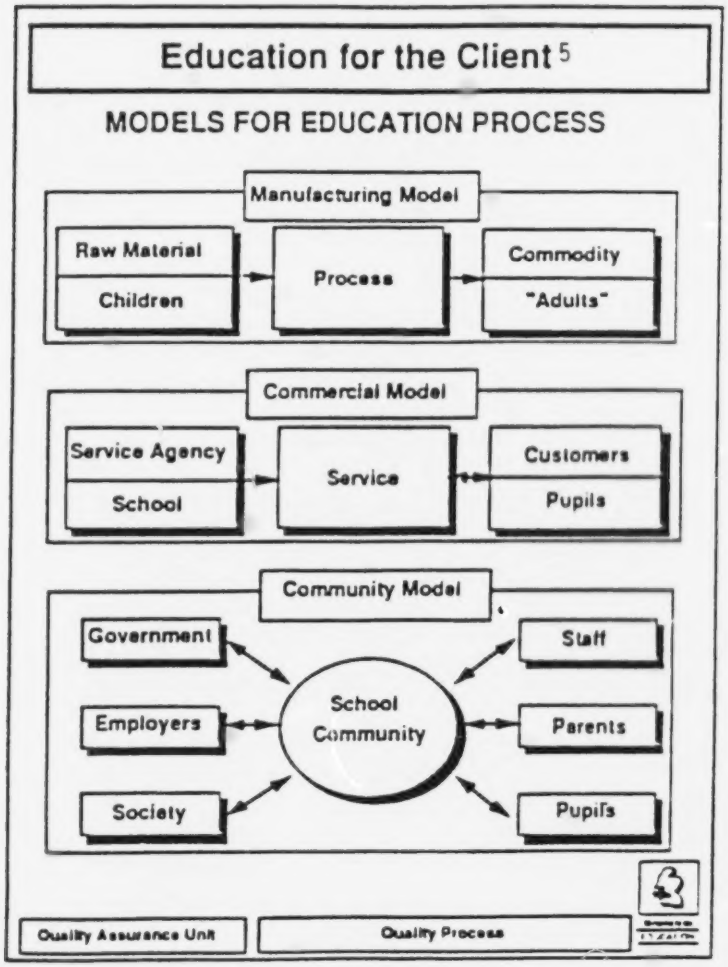
Caring for the needs of those who use the service

The use of the word "partners" emphasises the close relationship that clients of the education service have to schools and the authority. Education is a service which is not simply received. There are many types of clients including parents, employers, higher education establishments and of course the pupils themselves. All receive a service but they also contribute to it and the concept of partnership best describes this relationship. Partnership in education has been written into the mission statement in a way that emphasises the importance of this aspect of education.

Similarly, equality issues are tackled in the quality process because the great social diversity in Strathclyde poses a major challenge for the authority, particularly through its social strategy. This is not true of all local authorities and Kathryn Riley in her recent study of ten authorities noted that "Equality issues did not feature highly in the education indicators' debate in a number of LEAs".

Incidentally, Kathleen Riley's study raises interesting issues about the structure of quality assurance and the balance between inspection and self-evaluation. As will be pointed out later, the Strathclyde approach is increasingly involving assistance to schools in development planning and self-evaluation.

The diagram overleaf represents three ways of regarding the work of schools.



The "manufacturing model" presents children as raw material which is worked on in the school process, the children finally leaving the system as "finished" adults. Although this may seem a very simplistic vision of the education process, it is remarkable how commonly it underlies public statements about education. A more sensitive approach could be called the "commercial" model in which the school offers a service to pupils who can be regarded as customers. This is a market model in which the wishes of the pupils become paramount and in some ways it characterises the pupil-centred vision of

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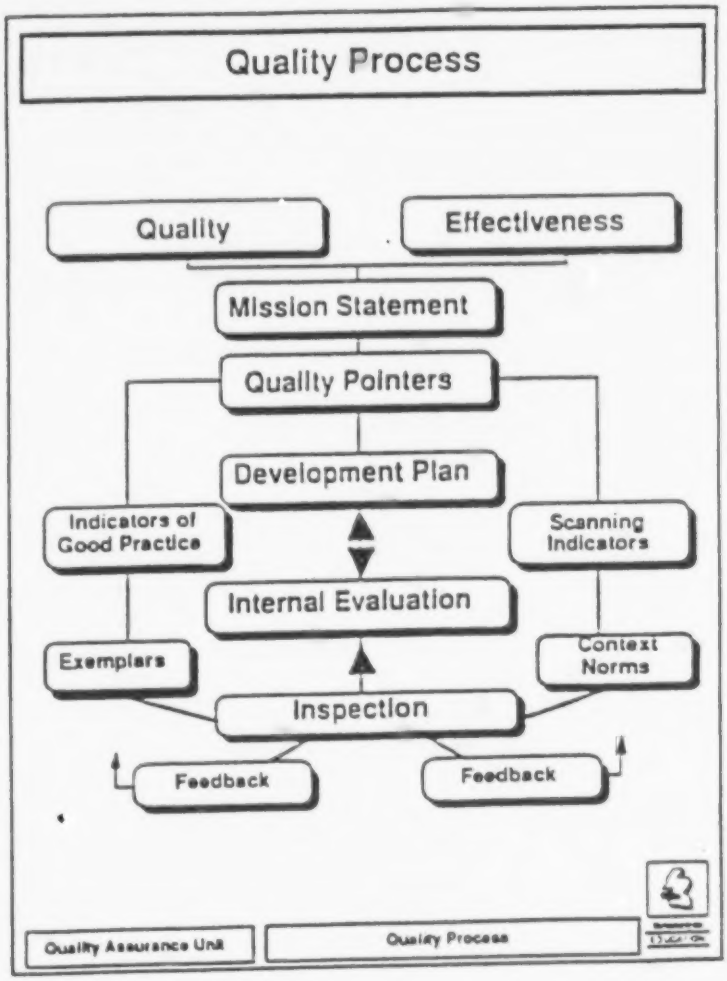
[5] Riley, Kathryn: Education Indicators and the Search for Quality; INLOGOV, 1992

education. It does not emphasise sufficiently the professional judgment that is required in providing appropriate, rather than simply desired, education. The "community" model of education best describes what is being attempted in Strathclyde and elsewhere in Scotland. Here the school is seen as working in partnership with a range of agencies and groups (including the pupils), all of whom have legitimate demands to make on the service but all of whom also contribute to the richness of the process. In this model pupils do not simply come to school to learn. They actually contribute to the learning process and to the whole ethos of the school.

The complete quality process can be summarised in the diagram below.



The strength of the Strathclyde process is that the indicators are based on an agreed set of aims. One interesting result which has arisen from the setting of indicators within the quality process has been that they can be used as a framework for development planning. This is because the indicators represent the aspects that should be taken into account in order to achieve the mission statement. For this reason the quality assurance unit has become directly involved in the development planning process. Schools are encouraged and assisted to use the quality process first of all as an audit tool while carrying out the school audit as a preliminary stage of development planning. At this stage the indicators can be used almost as a check list to scan the current activities of the school. In the next stage they can be used to set up priorities for development and templates have been provided to allow schools to do this easily. In this way development planning can be linked directly to the mission statement.

One aspect of development planning which can be overlooked is the need to continue to maintain the implementation of policies across the whole range of the organisation's activities.

The quality process with its set of indicators across the whole of the mission statement provides a useful means of ensuring that normal policy implementation continues while certain areas of development are prioritised. Quality assurance staff are working in close collaboration with the Strathclyde educational development service in assisting schools in this process.

The Scottish Office Education Department has recently produced sets of performance indicators to assist school with self-evaluation. As these documents represent the national criteria which will be used by Her Majesty's

Inspectors it is clearly important that schools use them in their development planning and in their self-evaluation process. In order to avoid confusion and to assist schools in getting the most out of all available materials the quality assurance unit has provided a means of making a direct link between the Strathclyde quality process and the SOED indicators. This will be made available in a computerised version of both schemes using HyperCard to allow school planners to use both sets concurrently.

It could be argued that all this effort in producing a quality process is simply adding to the burdens of schools which are already suffering from an excess of advice, instructions and paper. It is believed that the quality process now being developed will actually help schools in that it provides a method of bringing the huge range of responsibilities into some kind of order. The quality process does not prescribe new material so much as it provides a framework into which existing aims and activities can be set.

It could also be argued that there seems little point in a local authority providing its own procedures when reorganisation of local government seems not far off. This was obviously a consideration which was taken into account and it was decided that the process would be of use to schools whatever organisational framework might be established in the future. Because the emphasis is on providing schools with tools that they can use for both development and self-evaluation irrespective of the organisational framework, the process is believed to be valuable in its own right.

DISCUSSION

David Reynolds felt that Strathclyde's approach was both progressive and interesting, but that he would like to eat some of his own words - it was both right and wrong to tell schools about characteristics associated with effectiveness because some of them travelled across contexts and some of them didn't. Checklists were therefore dangerous. For example - studies of "very effective schools" had shown that they could be very differently led. A US study had also shown that some schools became effective by cutting themselves off from the community - so even the most totemic features of 'school effectiveness' might not travel very well. His preference was that schools find their own criteria, use the more applicable school effectiveness features, and get feedback on the difference between their predicted and actual performance. He felt that the added-value approach wasn't really understood. The solution was to run a data-based system rather than a knowledge-based one. Out of that kind of approach, you might get the kind of professional culture that everybody had been talking about. The problem with the kind of reflexive/talk/culture model that people had been espousing was that it led to little focus on actual behaviour. He started from the view that if you changed behaviours then attitudes would follow - the 'talk' culture started from the other end, hoping - mistakenly - that changing attitudes would be an effective starting point. They should ban discussion of culture unless it was clearly linked to behaviour (.. he reached for his gun..).

That brought David Hopkins into the discussion. The first problem with the kind of system-based approach was one of language. Teachers didn't like talk about 'conformity to specification' or 'continuous improvement'. "It's not their language and it's not their values". If you presented them with the idea of

'continuous improvement' they would take it to mean piling change upon change. There was also a problem about the nature of some of these management concepts - teachers needed to work through and internalise ideas, as Stenhouse had argued. That 'working through' was a 'secondary process of policy creation' and it was necessary - notions like 'conformity' tended to negate that idea. His third point was that curriculum change and management change went hand in hand - without that dual focus, change would be marginalised. Management recipes for curriculum change tended to miss that point.

Nor did he believe that teachers had to work conservatively with their own language - it was possible for them to extend that language, and experiment with their practice. We needed - as Miles argued - 'action images which resonate with people's experiences'. The work he and Hargreaves had been doing suggested that this programme was feasible, and that it was effective.

Sheila Riddell asked Phil Drake a key question: was it working? The answer was that it was too soon to say - two years was too short a time within which to evaluate an effort to make permanent and long-term changes. The first obstacle was to overcome staff fears. But there were promising signs: schools were asking for help with audits, they were putting a structure for change in place. Of course, it would always be difficult to tell what had caused what - they had also made schools take exam results very seriously, and there were indications of better results.

But if you stress one criterion wasn't it bound to undermine others? Like if economic criteria were stressed, didn't ideas of social justice suffer? How did you prioritise these indicators? Wasn't it all a bit spurious? Did bad results tell

you anything about bad practice? Some of the group had doubts about the utility and effects of such a system, but Phil Drake pointed out that the system was flexible, and schools might single out certain foci. He also went on to offer the group a series of reassurances. The Strathclyde system was not based on "checklists" but on "characteristics of effectiveness" which reflected the width and openness of the criteria. David Reynolds was right to point to Galloway's study, which showed that four effective schools were led differently. The point was that they were led. The characteristic in the Strathclyde list was "Leadership of the head teacher" but the exact mode of leadership was not spelled out because leadership style varies and quite different styles can be effective. The important aspect was that the school was given direction by the head teacher.

Phil Drake felt that the danger about leaving schools to find their own criteria was that they were left to do an enormous amount of work. Nuttall's study of self-evaluation showed the danger of the laissez-faire approach. Either schools used the freedom to defend existing practices or they did little because of the enormous job of doing it in a formal and structured manner. Nor did Reynolds' points answer the accountability aspect: was the funding being used well? While education remained a public, taxable provision, this question could not be dodged.

David Hopkins' worry about terminology was understandable. Teachers were suspicious of terms like "conformity to specification". What had to be remembered about the Strathclyde approach was that it was a departmental process rather than just a school process. It set the work of the whole department, administration and school, into focus. Having said that, the terms referred to by Hopkins were deliberately quoted from the language of TQM to

show the provenance of the concepts. In practical terms these are discussed as:

Conformity to specification - keeping to agreed aims;
Continuous improvement - continually trying to improve;
Client focus - caring for the needs of those who use the service;

His belief was that the Strathclyde system was beginning to show itself to be robust and useful in helping schools to set up their development plans.
He agreed, however, with Sheila Riddell's point about one criterion eclipsing the other: it was a practical problem. People tended to adopt an either-or approach. However, the reality was that we all had to cope with multiple and competing demands.

David Reynolds suggested that a way forward would be to recognise that differences between schools were no greater than differences within schools. Perhaps it was time to 'to stop talking about the whole school'. The impact of factors such as class, gender etc all varied within schools. His belief was that about 4/5ths of the 12% difference that could be attributed to schools was down to differences between classes within school - 'it may be that we're all down the wrong lane', and that in terms of school effectiveness it was time to think about different types of data collection, and of development planning. Barry MacDonald was having none of that: institutional differences 'dwarfed' inter-class differences in his experience, and, besides, differences in what? We were talking about 'academic outcomes, not educational ones'. Not at all, said David Reynolds, look at Tomlinson's results - the school effects were classroom-based.

6. CHANGING SCHOOL CHANGE STRATEGIES

David Reynolds

There is no doubt that school development planning, school effectiveness research and school quality assurance mechanisms have now reached that stage where every school and every teacher 'knows' something about them. School effectiveness has an increasingly valid knowledge base (Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992; Mortimore, 1991) and school improvement has an increasingly reliable set of mechanisms that can help schools develop as organisations (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991). Strangely, though, it is just at this stage of development and take up of ideas that a number of recent findings in the school effectiveness literature cast considerable doubt on the usefulness of much of what we have been doing to improve school quality. Further, the new wave of literature from the United States on what are called HRO's (high reliability organisations) casts considerable doubt on the usefulness of such widely adopted strategies of quality assurance as TQM. The new knowledge inputs, the consequences of these for our existing strategies of school improvement and indeed the need to radically re-think the principles and practices of quality assurance in education in the 1990s form the subjects of this brief paper.

The Changing School Effectiveness Knowledge Base

The initiative in Scotland concerned with reviewing school effectiveness literature which I have been involved in (Reynolds, 1991) and the orientation of the recent schemes from Strathclyde Education Authority promoting school effectiveness outlined by Phil Drake elsewhere in this publication are based upon the notion that there are a number of factors which have been shown to be associated with being an 'effective' school, defined as one that adds value

to its intake of pupils in promoting their academic and social development. Many LEAs elsewhere in Britain have also brought to their schools' attention these 'recipes' of effectiveness factors and have encouraged discussion about their potential adoption in their schools.

However, the knowledge base of school effectiveness has increasingly begun to suggest that those factors that are associated with 'effectiveness' may not be universal across cultural contexts but rather may be culturally specific. We have seen numerous examples of this in recent work:

1. Factors which are associated with effectiveness appear to differ by the nature of the socio-economic composition of school catchment areas, with for example high parental involvement in the educational life of a school being a factor associated with school effectiveness in middle socio-economic status areas but not in low socio economic status areas, where effective schools 'buffered' their students and their community by withdrawing from active interaction with it (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986; see also Wimpleberg et al, 1989 for further speculations).

2. Effective school factors differ from country to country, with for example the effective school principal in the United States frequently appearing to be an assertive instructional leader (Levine and Lezotte, 1990), by the effective school principal in the Netherlands educational system appearing to be impossible to characterise in this way (Van de Grift, 1990).

3. Effective school factors may be different in rural and urban contexts also (Teddlie and Stringfield, 1991).

4. What is effective may vary considerably with the personality, past history, present 'culture' and 'situation' of schools, as shown by an interesting study of four effective schools which exhibited low rates of behaviourial problems in New Zealand, where one headteacher was autocratic, one permissive and two were 'mixed' in their management styles (Galloway, 1983).

To worries concerning the appropriateness of direct importation of schools effectiveness recipes into schools, have recently come findings which suggest also that the concentration on the unit of the school for policy change and school improvement may itself be inappropriate. We know from a number of recent reviews of literature that only a small proportion of variation in pupil achievement is due to factors located at the school level, whereas a much higher proportion of variation is due to classroom or what are increasingly called 'instructional' factors (see reviews in Creemers, 1992; Reynolds, 1992, and the IEA re-analysis in Scheerens et al, 1990). Students clearly do not learn at the Principal's knee; they learn in classrooms and at the instructional level of their schools.

If the classroom level is a more substantial unique influence upon children's development than the school level is, then some of the obsession with generating school level improvement strategies that can be seen as axiomatic within the school improvement/development community (Fullan, 1991; Hopkins, 1987) would seem to be alarmingly misplaced. (My own hunch is also that many of the rather disappointing effects of school improvement programmes carried out at school level are because those teachers most in need of the improvement knowledge base are apt to regard it as too abstract if it is couched in terms that relate to the school, whereas knowledge that is couched

at the level of classroom instruction, or classroom curriculum would get much closer to those teachers' 'focal concerns' (see Reynolds et al, 1993 for further speculation on these themes).

Beyond TQM - the High Reliability School

If the school effectiveness research base should lead us in the direction of concentrating our efforts on the instructional or classroom levels of schools and towards encouraging schools to find out which effectiveness factors should be adopted by them rather than simply working out as at present how the agreed factors can be implemented, then it must be added that the whole emphasis upon the securing of quality through the collegiality, consumer responsiveness and flexibility of the various TQM models and their derivatives must also now be regarded with considerable suspicion.

The emerging evidence about HRO's (Stringfield and Slavin, 1991), by which we mean high reliability organisations such as nuclear power plants, electricity supply organisations, aircraft control towers and the like, is that new types of organisational structures are necessary to generate settings in which, as the school effectiveness movement has always wanted, 'all children can learn' (Edmonds, 1979).

At the moment, the educational system has been increasingly adopting procedures and insights from the management literature which stress trial and error improvement, and which are based upon the individual school being encouraged to experiment with the 'leading edge' of whatever programmes (like school effectiveness research) can be seen as helping pupils' development. However, what children need in order to learn is both schools which are aware

of possible valid technologies of learning and also schools that are at the same time reliable in the sense that all teachers are competent at matching the child with the valid and effective technology that he/she needs. It is not enough, in other words, to have schools where the 'ceiling' of competent teachers are developed: what is necessary for reliable organisations is to move the 'floor' of the less than competent to the place where it merges imperceptibly with the 'ceiling'.

HRO's seem to have the following characteristics, some of which are similar to those in the 'TQM' literature and some of which are clearly very different:-

1. HRO's have absolute clarity on goals, with all staff having a strong sense of their primary mission.

2. HRO's have standard operating procedures (SOP's) which lay out what personnel should do.

3. HRO's recruit personnel positively and appoint those who are most likely to adhere to the SOP's.

4. HRO's constantly test their personnel and their programmes to destruction, in order to identify 'weak links' that generate unreliability.

5. HRO's are strong on performance monitoring.

6. HRO's have mutual monitoring of all groups, administrators and line staff, by each other.

7. HRO's pay attention to small system failures that could cascade into major system failures. They 'take their stand' on details.

8. HRO's are strongly hierarchical, but at times of stress, 'peak load' or high activity, groups are allowed considerable freedom to cope with the situation.

9. Staff relationships are close, interactive and interdependent.

10. Equipment is kept in the highest working order.

There is, of course, no guarantee that the literature on HRO's is likely to generate educational improvement, in just the same way as effective TQM strategies from industry may not be completely appropriate to generating effective educational settings. However, if we have been willing to try out or pilot models like those of Deming (1988) for example, then there would seem to be a logical case for experimenting by introducing into schools characteristics of those organisations which have generated 'trials without errors' and high reliability.

The issue in education is not so much that we need to have a valid technology, since the large number of existing school effectiveness and school improvement schemes show that we can generate in certain circumstances high quality schools. The issue is more how to ensure that all teachers and all schools do what the existing small number of effective schools do.

Conclusions - Changing School Change Strategies

We have argued above for schools to resist the notions that there are blueprints of good practice that exist that are appropriate for all situations. Instead, it is clear that schools should be encouraged to find out what precise effectiveness factors and processes are appropriate for their national and local cultural, social and economic situation.

We have also argued that our problem in education may not be so much in obtaining valid knowledge of 'what works' in different contexts but rather may be that of ensuring that all teachers in schools consistently 'take up' the valid knowledge. The literature on HRO's has been outlined to exemplify an approach which is concerned with generating organisational reliability and generating the consistency, cohesion and constancy that is necessary to generate high quality learning environments for complete cohorts of children.

My own feelings are, however, that it may be the entire intellectual enterprise of the 1970s and 1980s 'school improvement paradigm' that is redundant in terms of it helping us to generate higher quality school learning environments. Speculations on this theme are to be found in more detail elsewhere (Reynolds, 1993; Reynolds et al 1993), but the school improvement paradigm has customarily emphasised reflexivity, culture and attitudes as the focus of change efforts, but it is changed teachers' behaviours to which children respond. The paradigm has customarily emphasised the 'journey' of school improvement, rather than concerning itself with the 'destination' in terms of whether children are actually learning more. It has additionally, as we noted earlier, been concerned with the school level as a set of organisational arrangements, rather than with the curricular and instructional arrangements at classroom level.

It is perhaps time to dispense with these old models and to try out new programmes of school improvement which build on the designs of past models which may have crashed. These new programmes need to be orientated to changing the classroom processes of schools, to be behaviourally oriented, to be concerned with pupil's learning as a priority, and to be based upon the insights within school effectiveness knowledge of what range of effectiveness factors may be effective in specific settings. These programmes should also be concerned with the consistency and reliability of the schools in which they are implemented, and should try to replicate the intense interaction, standard operating procedures and active 'hiring and firing' policies HRO's have. Such programmes, like HRO's, need to take their stand on detail.

Some experimentation with programmes of this kind would, in my view, be infinitely preferable to the continued use of paradigms of school improvement which may be well past their intellectual sell-by dates.

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7. CRITICAL VISIONS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

Ian Stronach

The debate had threatened to polarise round a number of issues - the nature of education, the meaning of quality, the possibility of 'models' of good management, the question of public accountability, its relation to professional development, and so on.

It looked for a time as if we might end up with some pretty irreconcilable oppositions like:

1. Private knowledge educates: public knowledge humiliates.

2. Private knowledge resists reform: public knowledge insists on it.

3. A real education is unpredictable: a predictable education is unreal. (outcomes that you can predict aren't worth having).

4. Changing 'talk' is just talking about change: but change behaviour and the culture will follow.

The purpose of the last session was to try and resolve some of these oppositions, or at least to acknowledge some of their ambivalence and complexity and come up with both development and research possibilities for the future.

What would a sensible Quality Assurance practice look like?

1. Linking diagnosis and development

First, it would acknowledge that there is generally a crucial lack of connection between policy and INSET at school level. Whether conceived institutionally (whole school development plan) or individually (appraisal), there was little point in asserting a positive change process without clear, resource-based plans to co-ordinate diagnosis with development. A school might find itself surrounded by regional, institutional or individual audits of various kinds, and be unable to respond to them - either because of planning and resources were inadequate, or because the results were contradictory, or because of the overload of maintaining such varied and extensive forms of inspection. It was clear that the Strathclyde and Fife approaches aimed to bring together monitoring and development, but both seemed to carry some danger of over-loading schools, and of failing in practice to articulate diagnosis and development. A lot of quality circles had to be squared if national, regional, and school priorities were to coalesce in an agreed framework that staff would genuinely want to work towards. The more autonomous model that David Hopkins had offered might have greater possibilities of 'ownership' for staff in a school, but it was at least implicit in David's account that earlier school improvement type schemes had been too time-consuming for many schools. It was also possible that schools could not adequately understand their performance if they could not compare themselves with similar schools.

The question of diagnosis versus development, of course, is one of balance. It may be that in the broadest perspective, our culture is skewed towards inspection rather than development - both industrially and

educationally. The guru of Total Quality Management, Deming, stresses the positive and creative aspect of change - the need to improve continuously the quality of the process rather than the inspection of the product .. 'improve constantly and forever every process for planning, production and service' (Neave 1990 p42), but British industry has been more concerned with quality control rather than quality improvement, tending to dismiss education and training (for example) as 'cost, not investment' (op cit p55). Similarly, our secondary school pupils are far more closely scrutinised in terms of their 'product' (qualifications, tests, examinations) than their German counterparts, as are our secondary schools. David Hopkins' conclusion was that we should worry less about defining quality/effectiveness/excellence and concern ourselves more with 'the process for quality assurance - development planning, action research and appraisal'. Perhaps that point needs to be taken further - shifting the accent further towards development and improvement.

2. Defining indicators and acknowledging values

What would count as suitable performance indicators in this process of diagnosis? First of all, there was the dilemma between quantity and quality. Some Quality prescriptions from industry stressed that measurement was a necessary discipline - 'quality doesn't improve unless you measure it'. (Reichheld and Sasser 1990). Initiatives like Compact adopted the 'measurable' and set in train some uneasy reductions of performance of education to 'conformance'. Educational Quality Assurance had to find ways of getting beyond the easy targets (exam results, attendance) to the 'qualities' of the educational process. In the end, it was absurdly illogical to insist that you must quantify quality.

Then there was the problem of reconciling specific and general aims. Schools served general purposes (a sense of community) in individualised ways (personal development) for abstract justifications (morality, democracy). They had to have - to put it in Louis and Miles' contemporary jargon 'visions':

'A vision relates a school to its place in society and gives larger meaning to the work that is being done by administrators, teachers and students; goals only deal with desired ends inside the organisation' (Louis and Miles 1990 p23).

But such visions are always contested, as Pollitt has pointed out in other contexts: 'Thus the NHS finds the pressure of tight resource constraints kindles new flames in the old arguments about whether it is a sickness service or a health service (..) In schools, too, beneath the managerial debate about basic skills and examination scores waxes a more fundamental argument between the new vocationalism and the battered forces of emancipatory, liberal education' (Pollitt 1987 p90).

Given such necessary diffuseness and contradiction, it is clear that performance indicators had to be extremely carefully thought out and handled. They were bound to be reductive, since 'education' had such a range of intellectual, personal and social goals; they were also likely to have unintended consequences. Therefore they had to be seen - universally - as indicators rather than conclusions.

The SOED had identified qualitative performance indicators (SOED 1992) based on the sorts of professional judgement that Scottish HMI made. This process of self-evaluation took general aims and reduced them to specific areas and themes, to 'touchstones, descriptions of different degrees of quality'. (Spencer and McGregor 1992 p118). These indicators were then aggregated into four broad levels of performance judgement. Interestingly, this process tried to combine value-laden and value-free elements, leaving it to the school to write in their own values, but offering an apparently 'objective' way of deciding whether these values were being realised in practice. This was achieved by acknowledging that the qualitative indicators did not address some 'very significant underlying questions' (p119), but instead looked at more technical criteria concerned with effective learning - '..rather, operating within a context of ideas about curriculum continuity, progression and balance, and about learning and teaching, which are sustained by a broad national consensus.' (p119) Clearly, this position involves empirical, philosophical and practical assumptions. Empirically, does such a consensus exist? Philosophically, is it desirable to separate technical from moral issues? Practically, will such procedures be too simple to be useful, reducing education to four levels of performance? It is not possible to answer any of these questions in this context, but clearly this initiative by the SOED is the most innovative attempt at a qualitative approach to Quality Assurance in Scotland and deserves detailed consideration and careful evaluation.

One advantage of the SOED scheme was its comprehensiveness. Within the given framework, schools could identify their own priorities. This dimension, of choice and focus, was also problematic, as David Reynolds

pointed out. If schools could focus on certain aspects of their work, then which criteria would inform these decisions - what were the key effectiveness criteria for that particular school? Did the 'whole school' approach neglect individual teaching and learning performances? His argument - for a deliberately behaviourist approach - was that direct and systematic intervention in the pedagogic processes themselves might be the way forward, raising the floor instead of the ceiling of school performance - a notion to horrify the 'old liberals' and the 'quality managers' alike. On the other hand his attempt to prescribe teacher behaviour in classrooms wasn't new: the road towards prescriptive, teacher-proof solutions was a well-trodden one - both ways.

3. Developing new research approaches

There was broad agreement in the group that the best way to develop educationally appropriate quality assurance systems was to bring together aspects of research and action at school level. This might best be achieved through school development plans that were flexible (eg: they offered a range of principles and scanning indicators from which schools could select appropriate and feasible targets). Within educational research, the action researchers had tended to concentrate on internal 'cultural' change, while the 'school effectiveness' group took as their starting point external measures of performance. Perhaps it was time to 'sew together the two traditions':

"For school improvement practitioners, school effectiveness research can provide an increasingly sensitive description of good practice, especially useful as school effectiveness becomes more and more sensitive to the

context of the school and the precise portions of the ability range that improvers are interested in". (Reynolds 1992 p19)

It was generally agreed that there could be no 'model' for each and every institution. Size, school ethos, and organisational patterns would influence the design, but some model was needed. Possibly, the school was not always the best focus - it might be worth exploring what subject or faculty models of effectiveness would look like.

On the other hand, it had to be recognised that defining the effective school was not necessarily an automatic prescription for school improvement. It cannot be assumed that those features which define effectiveness necessarily and directly produce effectiveness.

4. Designing organisations

Some of our concerns were about the nature of education. MacDonald and Jamieson saw education as unpredictable, idiosyncratic. Others seemed to hold to a no-nonsense straightforward version of education. Within our discussions such decisions may have seemed straightforward disagreement between "liberals" and "vocationalists". But that would be a crude conclusion: apparently "vocationalist" tracts with titles like "Delivering Quality in Vocational Education" contain statements like " ... a truly educational process is essentially unpredictable" (Barnett, in Müller and Funnell 1991,p36). These differing philosophies did not just spell out differences in the "what" or "whether" of performance indicators, they also implied different if implicit models of what education organisations ought to look like. Implicitly, MacDonald's

philosophy demanded an 'organised anarchy', an organisation that recognised that it had unclear technology, and problematic preferences: 'from this point of view an organisation is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision-makers looking for work' (Cohen 1972 p2). By way of contrast the SOED's Performance Indicators (SOED 1992) implied an organisational shape much closer to Mintzberg's description of a 'professional bureaucracy' (Mintzberg 1979). A problem in this area of educational management seemed to be that notions of 'quality' were being imported from business organisations through new, consensual ideologies of management. Yet management structures in education were invariably hierarchic in terms of rewards, status, and ultimate responsibilities. Most change patterns invoked collaborative patterns of work (participation, facilitation, whole-school involvement, team-work etc) that were flatly contradicted by the formal realities of the profession. Although the one pattern did not absolutely prohibit the other, it did inhibit the possibilities for radical change. There was a need to think seriously about formal as well as informal changes in 'leadership' - like contracts for institutional heads, job rotation, and 'flatter' organisational structures that were more in tune with the shape of modern educational management philosophies. It was no good if men in top hats said that flat caps were all the rage.

5. Proving the Case

There was a shortage of 'proof' that new forms of 'quality assurance' really worked. In many cases, as Phil Drake had pointed out, it was too

early to come to any judgement about recent QA innovations in education. There was a need for funding agencies to adopt more of a medium term strategy in evaluation - to allow innovations a few years to settle in, and then to evaluate them rigorously. The current pace of change tended to mean that innovations were forgotten about just as they became worth looking at. There was also a danger that monitoring could preoccupy the system so much that standards of everything (except monitoring) declined.

A second aspect of "proving the case" balanced accountability against participation. The public knowledge implied by accountability, as Pollitt has suggested, could restrict professional participation. Similarly, the linking of such knowledge to a reward system was likely to have counter-productive effects - as Deming also argues. Innovations needed to have a very clear idea of what kind of performance assessment and improvement mechanism they were introducing, and what its likely effects were. Was it a public or private kind of knowledge? To what extent did it focus on the individual or the organisation? Was it voluntary or compulsory? What incentives were inherent in the scheme? And how did it link to improvement? Pollitt offers a very useful typology of such schemes:

A typology of performance assessment mechanisms, with examples

Mechanism	*Example(s)*	*Comment*
A. Voluntary,individual focused with formal incentives/penalties.	*A number of US teacher appraisal systems eg the Tennessee Career Ladder, the Florida Master Teachers Programme.*	*It is hard to preserve the reality of the right to opt out when more and more incentives are offered only to those who join.*
B. Compulsory,individual focused, with formal incentives/penalties.	*Merit pay in the US federal service (and in the Home Civil Service, if present pilot schemes are extended to the whole service). These use extrinsic incentives. Other schemes use only intrinsic incentives, eg those aimed at professional development.*	*Extrinsic incentive schemes maximise management control. These rest on a belief that 'ordinary' pay plus 'intrinsic' satisfactions are not enough to stimulate performance improvements.*
C. Compulsory,organisation focused, with formal incentives/penalties.	*Central Government's control of local authority finance through rate-capping. Some UGC and NAB attempts to allocate resources to universities and polytechnics?*	*Efficiency tends to become the dominant criterion, not least because effectiveness is both difficult to measure and politically sensitive.*

D. Voluntary, individual focused, without formal incentives/penalties.	*Some school 'self-evaluation' schemes (see Turner and Clift, 1985). Also some medical schemes eg the Confidential enquiry into Perioperative Deaths.*	*Informal incentives may, however, be significant eg peer group esteem; acquisition of skills; co-ordination of approaches.*
E. Voluntary, organisation focused, without formal incentives/penalties.	*The CIPFA system of performance indicators for LEAs (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 1984). Also the 1981 DoE/Welsh Office Code of Practice for local authority annual reports (Dept. of the Environment, 1981)*	*If these voluntary schemes show up large variations in performance this is likely to strengthen calls for a move to mechanism F, or even C.*
F. Compulsory, organisation focused, without formal incentives/penalties	*DHSS/NHS performance indicator packages for 1983 and 1985. MINIS and a number of central government departmental schemes under the Financial Management Initiative.*	*Over time tend to move towards category C, especially in terms of resource penalties for 'poor performance'.*

6. Eliminating the negative

MacDonald at least argued this - it was sometimes easier to be certain about what was worst in education rather than what was best. A possible slogan for school development was: eliminate the negative.

7. A last look around

Finally, ocular images had cropped up from time to time in the discussions. 'Vision' was the central metaphor of Total Quality Management, for example. It seemed that some of the schemes we had discussed were like telescopes. They had segments that fitted together (individual, school-level, regional, national), but the eye-piece seemed to be at the top. They were managerial models. Others invoked the more flexible image of the zoom lense - they would decide on a focus, on a level, and give it a more specialised attention. Still others - sharing David Hopkins' dual concern for curriculum and management - were binoculars, used around the school by curriculum watchers of various kinds. At the other extreme, there was the private and professional approach, frosted glass and a closed door. And of course there was the proposal that we should eliminate the "negative" - MacDonald tapping his way along the road, looking to hand out a black spot or two...

Archie McGlynn concluded that what we needed was a 'set of spectacles' that would allow us to see critically what we were doing. But not wieldy affairs - what he had in mind as a metaphoric resolution to our dilemma was 'contact lenses so that nobody is aware that the specs are there'..

Now that, as Monsieur Foucault might have said, sounds like another seminar.

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This report was commissioned from the Department of Education at Stirling University by the Audit Unit of HM Inspectors of Schools. The Unit was established in April 1992 as a result of the Parents' Charter in Scotland (1991)

Other reports from the Audit Unit include:

Examination Results in Scottish Secondary Schools 1990-1992

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